General Law Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7184
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING THE LIQUOR CONTROL ACT.
Vote Date: 3/26/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute
PH Date: 2/28/2019
File No.: 577

Disclaimer: The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Representative Christine Conley, 40th District
Representative Tom Arnone, 58th District

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill makes several changes to the Liquor Control Act. There are several changes, though not limited to; updating the law to fit with the changes seen due to out-of-state shipping, breweries, wineries and increasing the population threshold for new package store permittees. The changes allow manufacturers permit for beer, cider, farm winery, brew pub etc. to conduct special even catering. This bill also allows for non-uniform cases of liquors to be sold with prior approval. There are also changes in shipping restrictions. This bill will modernize the current liquor bill.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:
None Expressed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Cohen, Christine, Senator, State of Connecticut

HB7184 will give farm wineries and cideries across Connecticut the opportunity to manufacture and sell hard cider by the glass. The law regarding these businesses is silent. Bishop’s recently was prevented by current law the ability to expand their business. The current law is antiquated and perhaps at the time it was written no one was aware that hard cider would be so popular. I support the lines in the bill that allow for the sale of cider for consumption on-site. I also think the bill should include the ability for farm wineries and cideries to serve their products off site. Business plans need to evolve with changing market needs, so our state should allow for this change.
**Conley, Christine, Representative, State of Connecticut**
This legislation should include language that would amend general statutes that allow a beer manufacturer to sell a larger quantity of beer direct to clients. This would allow for additional beer sales and local breweries could expand and grow.

**Davis, Christopher, Representative, State of Connecticut**
Mead is considered honey wine and is manufactured with fruit. Businesses specializing in mead are currently paying much more than wineries. The creation of a mead permit will bolster the mead small businesses in the state.

**Baker, Jack, Partner, Litchfield Distillery**
Increasing the volume threshold is critical to the success of the craft distillery industry in Connecticut. We greatly appreciate the support for the enhancement to the CT distillery industry.

**Labendz, Barry, Founder, Kent Falls Brewing Company**
The bills proposed by the state aim to protect and bolster the breweries that have chosen to operate in Connecticut. My hope is there enough support from the legislation to see change that would make a positive impact to the breweries.

**Jenkinson, Kenneth and Cook, Julie, Savannah Bee Company**
Supporting mead makers supports our local beekeepers. Due to online sales and skyrocketing rents, it is now necessary for us to cater to the customer experience in the store. We would like to offer mead glasses to our customers and let them sample mead. Patrons would also be allowed to purchase bottles from us to share. This would support the local economy as well as local beekeepers.

**Hart, Seth, co-owner, New England Cider Company**
There is no reason that a manufacturer of alcohol in the state of Connecticut not be allowed to share another locally produced similar product.

**Pappas, Phil, Executive Director of CT Brewers Guild**
The CT craft breweries are unlike any other, we are all competitors, yet we share a comradery. It would be a benefit economically to allow an increase in the amount of beer direct-to-consumers. Our breweries would like to work within the three-tier system. Our industry strives to remain competitive in this market and it can do so with the modernization of the state’s liquor laws.

**Diageo**
Diageo is in support of the “Mixed Case or Rainbow Pack” language.

**Bishop, Keith B., Owner, Bishop’s Orchards Farm Market and Winery**
**Simoncini, Aaren**
**Zack, Adams**
**Chicoine, Bob, Dockside Brewery**
**DeFrancesco, Alexander B., J. DeFrancesco Farm**
**Edwards, Jonathan, Jonathan Edwards Winery**
**Galarraga, Miguel**
**Hemenway, William**
Holmberg, Russell, Vice President, Hopkins Vineyard
Hopkins, Criollo, President, Hopkins Vineyard
Hurlburt, Bryan, Executive Director, Connecticut Farm Bureau
In support with changes
Kaye, Robert, President, Nod Hill Brewery
Krazewski, John, Captain and Founder, Armada Brewing Company
Miller, Rob, Partner, Epicure Brewing
Putnam, Precious
Sansome, Ronald, Spy Ciderworks
Sayer, Chris, Co-owner, Brewery Legitimus
Schulten, Bridget, Owner, Asylum Distillery
Support with changes
Staehly, Christopher, Staehly Farm Winery
Support with Changes
Taylor, John
Tomlin, Dan, Stafford Cidery
Vincent, Christine
Wark, Tom, Executive Director-National Association of Wine Retailers
Yang-Shi, Cheng
Collinge, Roger
Ramachandran, Manoj

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Cafero, Jr., Lawrence F., Wine and Spirits Wholesalers of CT, Inc.
This bill undermines the intent of current laws regulating beverage alcohol and put the local family owned small retail package stores at a sever disadvantage over the national, big box chain stores.

Monteleone, Patrick, owner, Harry’s Wine and Liquor Market
HB7184 is designed to break the backs of small businesses in Connecticut and drive out the mom and pop stores. Not only will it ruin stores, distributors also will have to cut staff.

Brescome Barton
As a Connecticut wholesaler, we strongly oppose several sections of this bill.

Carlson, Steve, Warehouse Wines and Liquors
We have grave concerns regarding HB7184 and what it will do to businesses in Connecticut. As far as the wineries and breweries, we have no concerns regarding supporting our local artisans.

Carpenter, Peter, Village Wine Cellar
Chain store mentality is consuming many industries and there is continued outside pressure to change our laws. Though our system is not without fault, it is not broken. Please leave this system alone.

Conti, Nick, Owner, Sav-Rite Liquors
Connecticut’s liquor law currently rewards our long hard hours. Please do not make changes to the current laws without our input, we have the expertise and are invested in the state and our communities.

**Dolan, Michael, CBWA**  
**Lavigne, Brian, Member of Teamsters Local 443**  
**Martel, Carol A., Northeastern Counsel, Wine Institute**  
**Singh, Sunpreet**

Reported by: Bonnie Gray, Asst. Clerk  
Date: 04/03/2019