

Allen's Wine & Spirits
3001 East Main Road
Portsmouth, RI 02871

March 20, 2023

Honorable House Committee Members,

I am writing you today to voice our opposition for House Bill 5415 and any related legislation. This bill, if passed, would be devastating to my family and business, which supports myself, my parents, my children and 8 employees and their families. I have read reports from other states, and have gathered anecdotal evidence from certain cases where revenues were cut 30% almost overnight. Our business would need to lay off approximately half of our staff and I would not be able to pay my mortgage or fund my children's college savings accounts.

This bill serves no one but large corporate interests who would like to see income shifted from 230 local families and their employees to chain-owned grocery stores, most of whom are headquartered out-of-state. This also opens the door for Amazon-owned Whole Foods to direct-deliver which would further decimate our businesses.

From a safety standpoint, Rhode Island independent retailers have had many decades of experience enforcing age-related liquor laws and preventing minors from having access to alcohol. If this bill were passed, minors would have many more opportunities to procure alcohol from, for example, a grocery store or convenience store who has just begun to stock alcohol and is inexperienced in checking IDs or enforcing other alcohol-related laws.

Additionally, this bill would harm local employment of individuals in the independently-owned liquor retailing industry. It would only take a few employees to operate a section of a grocery store versus twice as many to run a healthy and functioning retailer. To put it simply, this bill helps literally no one.

I hope you consider this testimony as you deliberate on this legislation and any related pieces going forward. As always, thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Alexander Allen
Owner - Allen's Wine & Spirits