



RHODE ISLAND LIQUOR OPERATORS COLLABORATIVE

REPRESENTING RHODE ISLAND'S INDEPENDENT LIQUOR RETAILERS

H6333 - OPPOSE

28 May 2025

Dear Chairman Casey and Committee Members:

The Rhode Island Liquor Operators Collaborative opposes House Bill 6333.

Prior to 1969, Rhode Island's cities and towns had the authority to issue as many Class A liquor licenses as they saw fit. As a result, many municipalities oversaturated their local markets with liquor stores. Seeing an issue with regard to public safety and a collapsing marketplace, statutes were put in place to tie the number of Class A liquor licenses to a population ratio of 1 in every 6,000 people. Furthermore, concessions were made for municipalities with a population of less than 20,000, allowing for the ratio to be 1 liquor store for every 4,000 inhabitants. With a population hovering around 10,000, The Town of Scituate falls into this lower ratio. There has even been precedent in recent years for municipalities who do not fall within the 1 in 6,000 ratio to revoke and retire licenses in poor standing. As it stands today, even after the legislation from 1969, Rhode Island has 1 liquor store for roughly every 4,500 inhabitants.

In 2016, The Country Liquor Store in Scituate closed when it was damaged by a fire, leaving Scituate residents with one operating liquor store for the past decade. In December 2024, the Scituate Town Council did not approve a three-month moratorium on the license held by The Country Liquor Store. This followed a November 2024 council decision to not renew the license for The Country Liquor Store. There has been interest in the second license formerly held by The Country Liquor Store, with a valid operator ready to open by Summer 2025 in service to the residents of Scituate.

The current laws exist in the spirit of public safety, limiting how much access the public has to beverage alcohol. H6333 undermines that mission and sets a bad precedent with municipalities across the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicholas A. Fede, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nicholas A. Fede, Jr.

Executive Director

Rhode Island Liquor Operators Collaborative