

Dear Committee Administrator Patrick Brennan:

On a local level, in my home state of Oregon, we are under attack. It seems the big stores want to convince everyone that taking away a government agency will make everyone happier and cost each of us less. I speak of the onslaught by the retail stores that want to privatize the liquor business. Think carefully about how this has been approached. It is big, outside of Oregon, conglomerates that want to change the system. They don't truly care about Oregonians, they just want to stick their hands in the kitty and take some of the spoils for themselves. They tell us it will profit the state more, but right now Liquor sales and contributions to the state are the **third highest** contributor to the Oregon budgets. Why should we let this go to companies that are not from here, and truly don't care about the Oregon budget, or its people.

This has been done in Washington with disastrous results. The liquor is almost 25% higher than it was. The law enforcement agencies are having trouble getting a grip on theft and **minor** use of alcohol. Many of the states residents drive to Oregon to buy their liquor BECAUSE its cheaper. If privatization comes to Oregon we will have the same results. And yes, prices will be higher, they have to be so the conglomerates can get their cut. I truly believe Oregonians are smarter than that.

How does this relate to good ole' American production and manufacturing? Oregon has a blossoming spirits industry. Many manufacturers of spirits, wine and special breweries have come to our state for its growth potential. All of this under the watchful eye of our liquor agency in an effort to help them flourish on an even playing field. To Privatize the liquor business would in many ways kill this great new industry. Many, many people could lose out. Perhaps your roommate or friend, or family member is somehow connected to this industry. We don't need outside interference to run our state. Ask a Washingtonian if there really better off, the answer might surprise you.

One last thing, The statement is being made that the state should not be in the liquor business, but the next time you go to your school, or your community center, or any place that we, as Oregonians come together, remember a lot of the funds for these communities come from the state liquor business contributions. The state also does the job of controlling the theft and minor possession too. There also seems to be a statement that always circulates with this type of initiative. The state does not run our liquor business, liquor stores are privately owned and the state only oversees it, just as the department of education or department of transportation does in there respective fields. The spirits outlet in the State of Oregon are privately owned and not subsidized by the state of Oregon in any way. The idea should not be to kill something we don't necessarily understand, but to find a solution to make it better. Something the big retail stores don't care about. They don't want to fix, they just want to take from all of us. Please do not succumb to big business tactics in our great state of Oregon. Send them away with a resounding NO on privatization. Its simply a fancy word to help big business take our money.

The OLCC has also put their bid in for an answer to the question of expanded liquor sales. Theirs is called a hybrid system. No matter what you call it , it still allows more access to liquor for minors than ever before. This can be a tragedy. The national average of deaths for under age drunk drivers in 2011 was 1.4 per 100,000. In the state of Oregon it is .5 per 100,000, well under the national average. How high would this average go if we change the law to allow so many outlets? The thought is scary. Our states legislature has a job to do. It is to protect our constitutes. By allowing this law to pass, by making more liquor accessible, are we helping to protect our state and its population? The answer is NO.

As Liquor store owners we have invested in the current system. Where else in this country will you find private citizens who invest in their government agency. We have done so, with the idea that our investment will be protected as we protect the OLCC. I have seen no proposals thus far, that are for the betterment of the current agents, under the current system. The system that has generated millions of dollars in revenue to support valuable public services at the state, county and city level. After all , we have been the back bone of the third largest revenue fund for the state. So, why penalize us, or put us out of business? Allowing retail outlets over 10,000 sq. feet, does not protect the agents from having an over-saturated market. Would you as a business owner be OK, with taking a possible 40% sales reduction under the proposed hybrid system? We all became agents based on the agreement set forth in the current system.

I am writing to let you know I am strongly against the initiatives and against the so-called Hybrid proposal now before the Legislature. Both avenues are sure methods to get more hard liquor in the hands of minors, to the detriment of all aspects of Oregon life. These proposals are much further reaching than the average Oregonian realizes, affecting everything from our public safety to the revenue flow to the State of Oregon. Please do not let this bill succeed. It is not the answer for the state of Oregon.

Sincerely,

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