

May 23, 2012

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To: Members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives

From: Randy St. John,
PA Food Merchants Association & PA Convenience Store Council

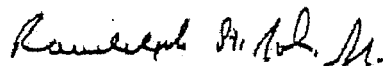
I am writing to explain the position of the Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association and the Pennsylvania Convenience Store Council on Representative Turzai's newest proposal for privatization. Our membership is composed of roughly fifty percent supermarkets and grocery stores and another fifty percent convenience stores.

Before stating our position, let me say that we are appreciative of being included as a stakeholder in this process, and Representative Turzai, his staff and the legislative staff of the House Liquor Control Committee have been kind enough to listen to all of our concerns. We appreciate the difficulty of trying to create a bill that satisfies the wishes of the stakeholders and also addresses the wants of consumers in Pennsylvania. Our members tell us that consumers tell them that what they want from privatization is the ability to buy beer and wine in supermarkets and convenience stores.

If we understand the newest proposal correctly, it would not create the kind of free enterprise system that we think consumers want. Selling a very limited number of licenses at a very high cost and barring convenience stores from purchasing wine and spirits licenses does not create the kind of free market solution we were hoping for. We do not feel that state government should determine how many outlets there are for adult beverages any more than they should determine how many drug stores, department stores, barber shops or bakeries exist within the state.

Although we commend Representative Turzai for his enthusiasm and his staff for patiently listening to our concerns, we cannot support his efforts of privatization in their present form. We would be happy to be a part of any ongoing process that allows stakeholders and consumers to craft a solution that brings true customer convenience to the citizens of Pennsylvania.

Yours truly,



Randy St. John
Senior Vice President