



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

COMPETITIVE ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR PRICING TASK FORCE

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, August 1, 2012

11:00 AM in Room 1B of the LOB

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 AM by Task Force Co-Chairwoman, Rep. Kathy Tallarita, 58th District.

The following task force members were present:

Rep. Kathy Tallarita, 58th District; Edward Berthiaume, Mark Abrahamson; Chief James Cetran; Ed Crowley; Brian Durand (OPM); David Leon;; Rep. Rosa Rebimbas, 70th District; Commissioner William Rubenstein (DCP); David Rutigliano; Commissioner Kevin B. Sullivan (DRS); Rep. Sandy Nafis, 27th District

Absent were: Dr. Ian Ayres, Dr. Stanley McMillen, Rep. Mary Fritz, 90th District

INTRODUCTION

Edward Berthiaume, the task force's other co-chair, who was unable to attend our previous meeting, introduced himself. He stated that he is Senate President Pro Tem Don Williams' appointee to this panel. He also commented that he looks forward to working with everyone on the task force.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

Rep. Tallarita reviewed all of the subcommittee memberships. She stated that all of the panel members' requests were accommodated. She also mentioned that all subcommittee meetings would be open to the public.

Rep. Tallarita stated that all subcommittee meeting work needs to be completed by October 1, 2012 in order to allow the full task force sufficient time to review their findings; keeping in mind that the task force must submit a final report by January 1, 2013. In addition, she asked that all subcommittees come to our September 12th meeting prepared with a brief progress report on their work to that date. Also, all of the subcommittees' findings will be reviewed at our October 10th meeting.

AGENCY PRESENTATIONS

Commissioner Kevin Sullivan introduced Marc Papandrea, Tax Unit Manager in the Audit Division - Excise Unit of the Department of Revenue Services, who would conduct the agency's presentation reviewing alcohol taxes in Connecticut.

Commissioner Rubenstein conducted a review of the current regulatory scheme in Connecticut.

Q&A

After the agency presentations, the floor was opened for questions.

Rep. Tallarita thanked Commissioners Sullivan and Rubenstein for their presentations. Rep. Tallarita remarked that she was unaware that druggists/pharmacies were permitted to sell alcoholic liquor. She asked if a pharmacy like CVS would be able to hold a permit and sell beer? Commissioner Rubenstein stated that, under state law, a pharmacy like CVS would indeed be permitted to sell beer. However, he noted that CVS made a corporate, business decision to not sell beer in Connecticut.

David Rutigliano raised an issue with the definition of 'minor' in our statutes. He noted that in the restaurant industry, patrons that misrepresent their age in order to purchase beer or liquor in a restaurant bar are less likely to be penalized than the restaurant owner. In many cases, the fines and penalties imposed on a restaurant owner can create significant hardship. In his opinion, he stated that these "minors" ought to be held accountable for their behavior too. Chief James Cetran commented that police departments are routinely called when underage "minors", that is persons under the legal drinking age of 21, are trying to purchase alcohol at a package store, for example. Police regularly make arrests in these instances. David Rutigliano said he appreciates that answer and stated for the record that his industry is not looking to change the legal drinking age.

Rep. Nafis asked Commissioner Rubenstein if his agency had any information about what other states are doing to regulate liquor? Commissioner Rubenstein stated that he will work with the task force's staff to provide information about our neighboring states.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rep. Tallarita announced that the next full task force meeting will be held on September 12, 2012 at 11:00 AM in Hearing Room 1B. She stated that the subcommittees' meeting schedules have yet to be determined. In addition, Rep. Tallarita stated that the task force will hear from some invited speakers at our September meeting. These invited speakers will be representatives from those associations or part of the liquor industry that do not currently have a representative on the task force. Rep. Tallarita asked that task force members who may have any speaker recommendations to submit them to the co-chairs or the clerk.

There being no further discussion, a motion was duly made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:14 PM.

Stephen A. Palmer
Clerk