

## **Last Store on Main Street Talking Points**

Governor Paterson is back at it again, looking to legalize wine sales in 19,000 new outlets as part of his 2010-11 state budget.

Even worse, the Governor has offered a phony compromise that would allow stores to sell potato chips and other minor items in a cynical attempt to convince the Legislature that his plan is good for us.

But we know better. We know this is just a phony plan cooked up by Big Box store lobbyists to convince us that they care about us. There is nothing phonier than a Big Box store that says it cares about small businesses. Just ask the butcher, the baker – oh, wait, they are all out of business because of Big Box stores, so you can't ask them.

If asked by a reporter for comment, feel free to use these points in your interview:

### **JOB LOSSES**

- If wine is sold in grocery stores, over 1,000 small businesses – wine sellers, liquor stores, wineries and others – will be forced to close.
- This translates into a loss of over 4,500 jobs – jobs which would not be recouped by grocers.
- Stores are already struggling in this difficult economy. Sales are down significantly from a couple years ago, and this would only hurt us more.
- A Cornell University study found that stores on average would lose as much as 32 percent of their revenue if this became law – that is a massive pay cut that would hurt me and many stores very badly. Considering business is down already, another 32 percent would be a killer.
- It's hard to understand why the Governor is doing this when his own Law Review Commission on the State Liquor Authority in December said this idea should be put on hold until there is a fuller understanding of the economic impact. We know it would kill our business but the Governor should at least follow the recommendation of his own commission and do the study.

### **UNDERAGE DRINKING**

- Approximately 823,000 underage youth in New York drink each year.
- Underage drinking cost the citizens of New York State \$3.2 billion every year – we should be looking for ways to reduce that problem, not make it worse.
- The Governor's Law Review Commission on the SLA says the SLA is "ill-equipped" to deal with underage drinking, with just 38 inspectors policing 70,000 license holders. Adding 19,000 new outlets that sell wine will only make matters worse for an agency that is already overwhelmed.
- In Florida, California and Texas – three states where wine is sold everywhere – the rate of alcohol related fatalities is more than double that of New York, and triple for those under age 21.
- The reason is New York has independently owned licensees, legally responsible for preventing youth from purchasing alcohol.

- This law would undermine current regulations and controls put in place to protect the public and minors.

#### SMALL BUSINESS COALITION OPPOSES A BAD IDEA

- Newspaper editorials say it will cause many stores to close and lose jobs
- Law enforcement agencies fear an increase in underage drinking
- Former officials of the State Liquor Authority fear the agency's ability to police rowdy bars and stop illegal alcohol sales will be overwhelmed by the dramatic increase in outlets selling wine
- Small wineries from every region of the State fear losing access to customers, because in spite of being told this proposal will help wineries, they know that only the most popular vineyards will get space on crowded supermarket shelves, leaving them out in the cold
- Parent and student groups like Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) and Parents Who Host fear an increase in underage drinking

These are some of the reasons why no state has passed a law like this in 28 years. Recent attempts in Massachusetts, Kentucky, Delaware and Tennessee have all been defeated.

Due to the impending fiscal crisis we all must tighten our belts – however, putting New York's small business owners, employees, teenagers in harm's way is not the answer.

Please feel to refer reporters to Wendi Leggitt of the Last Store on Main Street Coalition to answer more detailed questions. She can be reached at 212 681 1380.