



Dear Legislator:

Over the last several years, it's become common practice to criticize the State Legislature, with some going as far as labeling New York's as the most dysfunctional legislative body in America. From our perspective, nothing could be further from the truth.

Since 2009, the State Legislature has vigorously debated the issue of Wine in Grocery Stores. The former governor included it in two consecutive Executive Budgets, sparking a full debate on the merits of this idea. In both instances, the Legislature rejected this bad idea and adopted final State budgets without including this provision.

We believe you made the right decision after a thorough and thoughtful debate on the issue. We also believe you came to this decision despite the enormous amount of special interest money that the Big Box stores spent in Albany. Now we have more evidence that you stood tall in the face of pressure from the special interests.

Last week, NYPIRG listed Wegmans as one of the top spenders on lobbyists in Albany for the second straight year -- and they are just one of the Big Box stores that have tried to use their money to convince you to adopt wine in grocery stores. Our coalition, which includes many Mom-and-Pop stores that would be shuttered by this bad idea, has never been able to compete with the millions of dollars from the Big Box stores and has routinely been outspent 5-to-1. Instead, we had to rely on the facts and hope that would be enough to convince you to make the right decision.

That's why we remain confident that this year, as the special interest money pours in yet again, you will hold firm on your decision. Shutting down 1,000 stores, putting 4,500 people out of work, stunting the growth of small wineries and increasing underage drinking is still a bad idea, no matter how much money the other side spends to tell you otherwise.

So when critics belittle the State Legislature, send them our way. We are happy to tell the story of the little guys beating the Big Money special interests because the facts mattered. We'll tell them that when we went to Albany, the Legislature listened, debated and decided our issue on the merits. We'll tell them the little guy still has a powerful voice in Albany.

Thank you for your service and for demonstrating that the system does in fact work.

Sincerely,

Jeff Saunders
Coalition *Founder*
and *President*,
Retailers Alliance

Michael Carrera
Coalition *Leader* and
Executive Director,
Metropolitan Package
Store Association

Stefan Kalogridis
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