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**ORANGE COUNTY LEGISLATURE UNANIMOUSLY PASSES RESOLUTION
AGAINST WINE SALES IN GROCERY STORES
County's Legislature Says Plan Will Close Stores, Cost Jobs, Harm Economy**

NEW YORK, NY March 6, 2009 – The Orange County Legislature yesterday voted unanimously to adopt a resolution urging the New York State Senate and New York State Assembly to reject Governor Paterson's plan to legalize the sale of wine in grocery stores, gas stations, delis, bodegas and anywhere beer is now sold. This vote follows a similar resolution passed by the Erie County Legislature last month, which fears the Governor's plan will close many small businesses leading to the loss of jobs of hardworking New Yorkers.

If implemented, this change would force more than 1,000 stores to close and cost the state more than 4,000 valuable jobs. Additionally, the sale of wine in every store where beer is now available would give teenagers greater access to alcohol – resulting in a heightened risk of underage drinking and fatal drunk driving accidents.

Last month, Peter J. Martin, Ph.D., conducted a study titled, "Economic Impact of Expanding Wine Retail Outlets for the Five-Town Area Including Monroe, Woodbury, Chester, Blooming Grove and Tuxedo," to determine what impact the Governor's proposal would have on the local economy if grocery stores, delis, bodegas, and gas stations were allowed to sell wine.

The study concluded that if this change is implemented, in Orange County alone, total volume of wine sales would dramatically decrease, at least 14 jobs would be lost, and profits from wine sales would move to other states that house headquarters of large retail outlets and big box stores. The study and the County Legislature's resolution can be found on www.lastmainstreetstore.com.

Just last year, Massachusetts voters rejected a similar idea because of the devastating impact it would have had on teenagers, and **no state has passed this kind of measure in 23 years**. In Florida, California and Texas, three states where wine is sold everywhere, the number of alcohol related fatalities per 100,000 is more than double that of New York State. Even worse, alcohol related fatalities of those under age 21 are three times higher in these states where wine is sold everywhere, as compared to New York which has independently owned licensees, legally responsible for preventing youth from purchasing alcohol.

LEADD Chairman Dan Sisto last month revealed that a review of five years of State Liquor Authority (SLA) violations for serving minors in off-premise stores found that nearly 90 percent of the violations were in grocery and convenience stores.

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“These findings demonstrate that teenagers target grocery and convenience stores when they try to purchase alcohol,” said Sisto, who is also vice president of the New York State Troopers PBA. “New York has a good system in place now to control the sale of wine and liquor, and it makes no sense to change it.”

Small independent wine retailers have greater control over who walks through their doors – large chain supermarkets do not have this heightened level of control, giving teenagers greater access to the illegal purchase of alcohol. Recent studies have shown that underage drinking is estimated to account for up to 20 percent of the alcohol market in U.S. Similarly, over 10 million youths aged 12 to 20 reported drinking in a month – if wine is sold in the state’s grocery stores, the number of underage drinkers in New York will skyrocket.

“Underage drinking is a serious problem and we must do all we can to eliminate it rather than encourage it,” said Joyce Davis, Chairman of the New York State Environmental Prevention Task Force. “The State Legislature must realize this is not the answer to New York’s budget problems.”

Thousands of small business owners from across the state have gathered to form the Last Store on Main Street coalition to lead the fight against the legalization of wine sales in supermarkets. Due to the severe and even life-threatening consequences New Yorkers may face if this proposal goes into effect, the coalition has also launched a user-friendly website which provides detailed information on the issue. To access the website, log on to www.lastmainstreetstore.com.

The LEADD coalition includes: New York State Association of PBAs; Police Conference of New York; New York State Association of Chiefs of Police; New York City District Attorney Investigators Association; Police Conference of New York; New York State Troopers PBA; New York City PBA; Nassau County PBA; Suffolk County PBA; New York City Detectives Endowment Association; New York State Sheriffs Association; Port Authority PBA; New York City LBA; New York City CBA; New York State Professional Fire Fighters Association; New York State Capital District Parents Who Host Lose the Most Steering Committee; New York State Environmental Prevention Task Force; Choices 301, Inc.; Long Beach Medical Center's Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking; Western New York Prevention Resource Center at GCASA; Chatham Middle School SADD Chapter.

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