



RHODE ISLAND LIQUOR OPERATORS COLLABORATIVE

REPRESENTING RHODE ISLAND'S INDEPENDENT LIQUOR RETAILERS

H6056 - SUPPORT

8 April 2025

Dear Chairman Solomon and Committee Members:

The Rhode Island Liquor Operators Collaborative supports House Bill 6056.

With a focus on public safety, Rhode Island has a massive opportunity to provide more regulation in the hemp-derived THC space this legislative session. Beverage alcohol retailers, who already specialize in selling intoxicating age-restricted products, are perfectly set up and equipped to ensure that these hemp-derived THC products get to the public in the safest manner possible. They are already trained to detect the effects of intoxicating substances when interacting with consumers and are specialists in regulating when and when not to serve clients. A number of Class A retailers have hopped on board the trend and have found success in selling these regulated products.

Hemp-derived THC continues to be a hot topic across the country, with reports coming from other American Beverage Licensees affiliates. Lance Lively, Executive Director for the Texas Package Stores Association, maintained, "We're the closest to the consumer with a key role here. It's our job to make sure that these products, which are highly regulated and for good reason, don't fall into the hands of minors. We spend a lot of our effort and energy making sure that that's the singular most important piece of this puzzle, keeping these products out of the hands of kids ... At a liquor store in Texas, you have to be 21 to enter the store, so the age-gating issue is at the top of that ... We are well-suited to carry these products and sell them from a safety aspect." The very same point applies to Rhode Island's package liquor stores.

Sean Hughes, Account Director for the Connecticut Package Stores Association, commented, "During the 2023 legislative session, [Connecticut] lawmakers passed a bill that defined hemp-based THC, age-restricted its sale and broke products into categories based on potency. Package stores would be allowed to sell hemp-based THC seltzers to adults aged 21 and over if they contained 5 mg or less of THC per container." He continued that in the 2024 session, "[Connecticut] legislators decided to restrict hemp-based THC beverage sales to both cannabis dispensaries and package stores, where the monitoring of age-restricted products is top priority."

In the interest of public safety and regulation, we strongly support the passage of this bill. Beverage alcohol retailers are the experts in selling age-restricted, intoxicating beverages and are the gatekeepers for public safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicholas A. Fede, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nicholas A. Fede, Jr.
Executive Director
Rhode Island Liquor Operators Collaborative