

# Senate Law and Justice Committee

## Public Hearing to Consider the Governor's Liquor Privatization Plan

Hearing Room #1 North Office Building Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Tuesday, April 30, 2013.

Testimony of Lauren Foisy - Council Rock Coalition for Healthy Youth



Hello, my name is Lauren Foisy. I am also a junior at Council Rock High School South in Bucks County. I would like to first begin with saying thank you for letting us speak to you all today and from the bottom of my heart thank you for your service to the great state of Pennsylvania.

I'm deeply concerned of what consequences privatizing the liquor industry will tear through our state. Recently privatized states have divulged that they are having issues with increased alcohol use.

Alcohol abuse is not just a localized problem, but rather a concern for all of Pennsylvania. In fact, according to the US Department of Health, Alcohol is the number one drug of choice among America's youth. As many of you probably have heard or will be hearing often is the statement, "increased alcohol access leads to increased alcohol consumption." Excessive alcohol consumption is responsible for eighty thousands of deaths a year, five thousand of those deaths are people under the age of twenty-one.

What are the benefits of maintaining a state monopoly over our liquor stores?

- The current system provides a consistent stream of revenue, 500 million a year in **profit** to be utilized to meet the needs of PA residents! **WE OWN The Stores WE make the profit! If we sell the stores, how will we offset this loss in revenue long term? Then you must be prepared to raise taxes to offset loss.**

- Residents of controlled states consume 14% less spirits and 7% less total alcohol reducing public harm and have lower incidence of drinking and binge drinking among youth ages 12-25. (Alcohol Justice)

What Effects may we expect from Privatizing?

- Consumption of Alcohol will be higher per capita (Task Force on Community Prevention Service)
- Privatization leads to more retail outlets with a 42% increase in alcohol sales. (Task Force on Community Prevention Service)

A controlled system has state workers who have in mind number one, their jobs, but also that it would not be an incentive to sell to minors, and therefore makes alcohol less prevalent to underage people. State –run stores belong to the state and more easily can regulate the onsite marketing of products, keeping consideration of not targeting to potential younger consumers and can quickly remove products that maybe considered dangerous, deceptive or inappropriately promoted or packaged.

The state owned system is a **protective factor** to citizens from every walk of life.

I find this issue analogous to the tobacco lawsuits that occurred during the 90's.

I have personally met and spoke with Dr. Victor DeNoble, a former tobacco industry scientist turned whistle-blower, whose research proved that tobacco was addictive and killing people who chose to use it. Chemical compounds were purposefully altered in order to make a more addictive cigarette, yet this information was withheld from the public. **Large corporations KNEW** they were promoting a product with deadly addictive properties, but continued to advertise and promote tobacco as if there was nothing wrong with it. If we privatize the liquor stores, like tobacco, large corporations will advertise and promote a dangerous substance that can lead to the death of citizens. DeNoble's testimony helped fuel lawsuits against the industry and contributed to eventual enactment of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act. This 2009 law gave the Food and Drug Administration the power to regulate tobacco products and marketing.

Because lawmakers like you, had the courage to stand up for what was right, they prevented many deaths that would have been caused by tobacco use because of a controlled market.

Are you willing to accept personal responsibility for deaths and harm to children and families? I **beg** of you to please consider the lives that are at stake to be ruined and destroyed with a private system. A controlled system is the safest system for the citizens of Pennsylvania.

Our system in Pennsylvania may not be perfect, but it is the best for our citizens.

Thank you for your participation in this matter and thank you for lending your ears to our voices today.