

NJLBA LEGISLATIVE ALERT

On May 17, Senator James Beach, Camden County, introduced a series of bills that would have a major impact on all *on-premise consumption licensees* and their businesses.

NJLBA believes the bills will create unfair competition for existing licensees who have paid *enormously* for their licenses and struggled over the years with high taxes, and a never ending stream of burdensome regulations in order to stay in business. Fred Barnes, President, NJLBA says, *“these bills will simply drive many of our small bars and taverns out of business, as well as have a great impact on our members who also operate small package stores.”*

Summary & Comments

S-1903 – This bill would create a new alcoholic beverage license, known as a “restricted restaurant license,” which would be issued to restaurants that want to sell beer and wine in connection with the service of food for consumption in the restaurant. The fee for the license would be fixed by the municipality at 75% of the fee for a plenary retail consumption license. **NJLBA Comments:** *This means that every restaurant who wishes to do so could obtain a license to serve wine and beer, creating additional competition for you at a cost much lower than you have to pay. Isn't it enough that we have to compete with the “Seasonal Retail Consumption License”; the “Club License”; and the BYOB's? Now, the Legislature wants to create a new license for restaurants which will create another blow to the value of your license!*

S-1904 - Currently, the law prohibits any person or corporate entity from holding more than two retail licenses to sell alcoholic beverages. This legislation would increase the number of plenary retail distribution licenses that a grocery store may obtain – up to 10 over a 10-year period. **NJLBA Comments:** *While the bill does not allow for any additional licenses to be created by a municipality, it will allow the large supermarkets, and box stores to obtain additional licenses which will help drive you out of business! The sponsor says the bill is “pro-consumer” and that the customer wants to buy their alcoholic beverages at the same time they buy their milk and bread. Well, doesn't the Legislature care about the small business operators in their towns who will not be able to compete with the big supermarkets? Tell your legislator to vote “NO” on this bill.*

S-1905 & S-1906 – These bills would allow a municipality to issue a plenary retail consumption license from a contiguous municipality located in the same county – thus, circumventing the population requirements established by law. The sponsor argues that this restriction causes a “shortage of licenses” in some municipalities,

while there are surplus licenses in others. **NJLBA Comments:** *NJLBA opposes these bills as written.*

S-1907 – This bill creates a “limited religious retail distribution license” which would allow any food store which sells groceries and other foodstuffs certified as under rabbinical supervision to sell any unchilled alcoholic beverage that has been certified as kosher, or kosher for Passover for consumption off-premises. The fee for this license is set by the municipality in which the premises are located at an amount between \$31 and \$63. **NJLBA Comments:** *Please provide us with your comments and position on this proposed legislation.*

PLEASE CONTACT YOUR STATE LEGISLATORS AND ASK THEM TO OPPOSE THESE BILLS.

If you have any additional questions, please contact NJLBA @ 609-394-6730