



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William T. Stachowski

Senator Stachowski Joins the Last Store on Main Street Coalition as It Launches Final Push to Keep Wine Out of 19,000 New Outlets in New York State

WILLIAM T. STACHOWSKI April 7, 2010

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SENATOR STACHOWSKI JOINS THE LAST STORE ON MAIN STREET COALITION AS IT LAUNCHES FINAL PUSH TO KEEP WINE OUT OF 19,000 NEW OUTLETS IN NEW YORK STATE

Small Business Owners Rally Against Governor's Job-Killing Plan

Senator William T. Stachowski (D- 58th District) joined with “The Last Store on Main Street” Coalition today to join small business owners, wine retailers, elected officials and others to launch its final push to keep wine sales out of every grocery store, gas station, deli, and bodega in the state.

“The State Senate and State Assembly have both rejected the Paterson plan, recognizing that it could put 4,500 people out of work by potentially closing more than 1,000 stores,” said Senator Stachowski. “That is why I am here with the individual and small store owners, along with local wineries, to land them my support, here and in Albany.”

No State in nearly 30 years has adopted this bad idea, in large part because our understanding of the dangers of drunk driving and underage drinking has increased dramatically over the last three decades.

“We thank the State Senate and State Assembly for standing strong against the army of Big Box store lobbyists and siding with small businesses over corporate profits,” said Marc Ressler, vice president of the New York State Liquor Store Association and a coalition leader. “We urged the Legislature to remain firm in their opposition to the Governor’s plan and reject this bad idea once and for all. Our families and our future are at stake.”

The Paterson plan to legalize wine sales in 19,000 new outlets has generated strong opposition, with wineries, business groups, local governments, law enforcement and advocates who combat underage drinking leading the fight to defeat this dangerous plan.

Law Enforcement Against Drunk Driving, representing 200,000 law enforcement

professionals, along with a host of public safety groups, argues this plan would increase underage drinking by making wine more accessible to teenagers. New York State spends \$3.2 billion annually to deal with the impacts of underage drinking, so even a small 5 percent increase in this problem would wipe out any financial benefit this plan allegedly would generate.

Approximately 100 wineries, or about 35 percent of New York State's wineries, have also vigorously opposed the job-killing plan because they recognize that grocery stores would provide shelf space to cheap, imported wines – reducing access to consumers for New York wines. By contrast, only a handful of wineries support the Paterson proposal.

“The Legislature knows this bad idea would take a devastating toll on the state's small businesses, and our teenagers,” said Jeff Saunders, president of the Retailers Alliance and founder of the Last Store coalition. “The Legislature has already rejected this bad idea, but we will keep working right until the end because we know the Big Box stores are working overtime to mislead the public and the Legislature.”

Over the past three months, nearly 100 wineries from around the state joined the fight against the job-killing plan, along with the Buffalo Common Council, Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce, Erie County, Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce, Montgomery Chamber of Commerce, Nassau Council of Chambers of Commerce, National Federation of Independent Business, Plattsburgh North County Chamber of Commerce, Saratoga Chamber of Commerce, Sullivan County Legislature, Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce, Watertown North Country Chamber of Commerce, Wyoming County Chamber of Commerce, along with several unions: Teamsters Joint Council 16, United Food and Commercial Workers, and the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union.

“The Legislature has looked at both sides of this issue, and sided with working families over the phony claims from the Big Box stores,” said Stefan Kalogridis, president of the New York State Liquor Store Association and a coalition leader. “The Legislature knows this bad idea would take a devastating toll on the state’s small businesses. We should be working on ways to support small businesses across New York so the economy can thrive once again.”

Governor Paterson has pushed this bad idea despite critical findings by his own blue ribbon Law Review Commission on the State Liquor Authority, which said this idea should not go forward without an independent economic impact study. In addition, the Commission said the SLA is “unable to make prevention of underage drinking a statewide priority,” and noted that it has just 38 enforcement officials dealing with 70,000 license holders.

In recent days, the Commission Chairman admitted under oath that the State Division of Budget killed its plans for an economic impact study, fearing it would make plain the devastation the plan would create for small businesses.

In addition, the Division of Budget has yet to answer a February 10th Freedom of Information Act request to provide any evidence to support the claim that this idea would generate \$300 million in revenue. The Commission chairman testified under oath that the numbers changed to fit the administration’s budget needs.

“The Paterson administration has trouble with the truth, to say the least,” said Michael Correra, a coalition leader and executive director of the Metropolitan Package Store Association. “We know the truth: This is a dangerous plan that will crush Mom-and-Pop stores, put people out of work, increase underage drinking and will never produce even a

third of the promised revenue. Fortunately, the Legislature knows the truth as well and is fighting hard to put an end to this phony idea.”

No state in more than 28 years has approved legislation legalizing the sale of wine in grocery stores, with Kentucky, Tennessee and Colorado joining New York in the last year in rejecting efforts by Big Box stores to take over this business. Massachusetts voters rejected the idea in a referendum in 2008.