OAKLAND
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE

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Testimony for House Bill 4322
House Regulatory Reform 3/27/2007

Madame Chair and members of the committee my name is Darlene Levinson and I am an instructor in the Culinary Studies Institute at Oakland Community College in Farmington Hills.

I am here today to speak on House Bill 4322, which amends section 513 of the Michigan Liquor Code to include Oakland Community College as one of the colleges with a license to sell alcoholic liquor for consumption on the premises.

Our culinary and restaurant management programs were established some 30 years ago, and we are accredited by the American Culinary Federation. Part of the requirement for accreditation is that students must take classes that give them a "real life" experience in banquets, buffets, catering and planning events.

For the past 30 years, part of our curriculum at the Culinary Studies Institute includes classes that cover these topics by offering dinners and buffets to the public. These events are very well attended most of them sell out. We have used a special 24-hour license for these events, and I am proud to say that we have never had a problem with the selling of alcohol. These food and wine dinners prepare our graduates for the planning, management and organization of any kind of catering event. This makes them much more marketable when they go into the work force.

However, it is very time consuming and over the years, costly, to apply for these special 24-hour licenses every time our students have an event to execute.

I feel it is important to mention also that I am a certified TIPS trainer, which is a nationwide program that teaches waiters and bartenders how to responsibly serve alcohol, and how to deal with intoxicated patrons. TIPS certification is mandatory for our management students in my wine and spirits class. The real world experience that our students gain from these events helps to further enhance the TIPS training while still under the supervision of an instructor.

Our program has grown to full capacity and more over the past 10 years. Due to the increased interest in this degree we are offering more classes on the preparation and planning of events. We are severely limited due to the law that organizations could not have more than 5 special licenses in one calendar year.

The students in the Buffet and Banquet class, and the Event and Catering Management class do the planning and execution of these fine dinners to the public. The liquor license is a needed part of our academic programs for this reason. As we prepare these students to be future chefs and restaurant managers, it is important that they know the proper service of alcohol, and know how to be responsible in the selling of alcohol.

In conclusion, I am asking for your support of House Bill 4322 . Our license will be used to enhance the education of the students in our four programs at the Culinary Studies Institute. I appreciate the opportunity to come before you today and thank you for your time.

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