

Distinguished Committee Members:

My name is Michael Faulkner. I am a constituent of the 53rd district, and I am writing to support House Bill 4125 as originally submitted by Representative Ken Yonker.

I developed an appreciation of wine from my father, who as a first generation immigrant from Europe, believed that it was an essential part of the communal family meal. He taught me to appreciate the cultural importance of wine- how it was central to almost every aspect of life ranging from religious rite, to agricultural process, to flavor enhancer, to social lubricant.

As I start my own family, I am determined to continue the traditions taught to me by my father. While I love living in Michigan, my access to wines of the world is limited by the whims of local distributors who determine what to allow into State retailers.

I enjoy wines made in this country, and appreciate that I can have them shipped directly to my doorstep from the winery. Unfortunately, the same is not true if I desire to have European (or Australian, or South American) wines shipped from an out of state retailer. It makes little sense that the State can license and tax and regulate domestic winery shipments, but not do the same with out of state retailers. The internet shopping age has made the State of Michigan's current rules restricting shipment of wine from out of state retailers to appear anachronistic- I can have items ranging from fresh fruit, to fetal pigs for dissection, to toxic chemicals, to ammunition shipped to my door- next day for free, without question, yet I cannot have wine shipped from an out of state retailer sent in the same manner.

The argument of "protecting the children" is often made in the argument against allowing the shipment of alcohol via mail, FedEx, UPS, etc. In the many tens of wine shipments I have legally received over the past several years, I have never once had a delivery just left at the door- each instance has involved me producing my ID to the delivery agent. Wine is heavy and extremely expensive to ship- it's difficult to imagine a more inefficient method to get a quick buzz. I can't remember reading a single instance of minors obtaining wine from a domestic winery (which is currently legal), yet I read almost weekly (living in a college town) about students caught using fake ID's to buy cheap beer from the corner liquor store.

Allowing out of state retailers preserves the Three-tier system hallowed by distributors to preserve organization in the in-state alcohol distribution system. By allowing out of state shipments, the State of Michigan will no longer be violating Constitutional restrictions against interstate commerce as ruled by Federal District Judges in 2009. Finally, by legalizing out of state shipments, the State can capture lost tax revenue from "black market", unscrupulous shippers currently shipping into the state against state laws.

While I realize my concerns regarding this matter pale in comparison to other problems facing State Government, I feel that the bill as originally

written rights a wrong in our regulatory system. Laws written in the Prohibition era have no place in the Internet Age. I respectfully ask that your committee "frees the grapes" and removes the overly restrictive, anti-free trade regulations on interstate wine shipments.

Sincerely,

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