



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

Sen. Krueger And Assm. Hunter Introduce Bill Allowing Consumers To Buy Wine In Grocery Stores

LIZ KRUEGER May 11, 2023

| ISSUE: **WINE IN GROCERY STORES**



Albany – State Senator Liz Krueger (D-Manhattan) and Assemblymember Pamela Hunter (D-Syracuse) today announced the introduction of new legislation to allow consumers to buy wine in New York grocery stores. The new bill ([S.6786/A.6989](#)) would expand the purchases of wine to only grocery stores, and not to convenience stores, gas stations, drug stores or big box stores like Walmart or Target. Grocery stores would receive additional incentives to sell New York wines. The legislators discussed the bill today in an [op-ed in Empire Report](#).

“I have been championing this issue – allowing consumers to buy wine in their local grocery stores – for many years. When friends come to visit from places like Virginia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, or DC, they’re often dismayed to discover the law won’t let them buy wine in the grocery store,” **Senator Krueger** said. “But it’s time to change that this year.”

“Consumers want the convenience of purchasing wine in grocery stores – where they buy their food and other beverages, such as beer. It’s good for consumers and it’s good for a critical New York industry,” **Assemblymember Hunter** said. “Upstate New York – like the East End of Long Island – has so many vineyards and wineries, both old and new, that would benefit from being able to sell and promote their New York products in grocery stores across the state.”

Forty other states (including DC) allow consumers to buy wine in their local markets – where they can already buy beer in addition to all their other groceries.

According to a recent Siena College poll, New York voters support being able to buy wine in grocery stores 76-19%. Allowing the sale of wine in grocery stores is supported by 79% of Republicans, 76% of Democrats and 75% of independents, as well as by 73% of voters from New York City, 79% from the downstate suburbs, 77% of upstaters, 77% of women, and 76% of men.

The Krueger/Hunter bill differs from past efforts to allow consumers to buy wine in grocery stores in several important ways.

The 2010 version of the bill:

- Would have allowed wine sales licenses in any location that sold beer.
- Would have allowed wine sales at Walmart, Target, Costco, BJ's Wholesale, etc.
- Would have allowed wine sales in CVS, Walgreens, Stewarts, 7-Elevens, Speedways, Mobil Marts, corner delis and convenience stores.
- Would have generated upwards of an estimated 8,700 new wine licenses statewide (Note: And that was at much lower than a 100% participation rate).
- Contained no incentives for promoting New York State wine sales.

The new 2023 version of the bill:

- Limits new wine sales licenses to full-service grocery stores only.
- Eliminates big-box retailers and superstores by limiting bill to stores where 65% of sales are food related.
- Eliminates convenience stores, mini-marts and drug stores by requiring a minimum of 5,000 square feet.
- Will generate a maximum of approx. 1,900 new wine licenses at full-service grocery stores across New York State (Note: Assuming 100% participation, which is unlikely).
- Includes incentives for selling New York State wines (reduced license renewal fees based on NY wine sales).

“With overwhelming public support – from the left and from the right, upstate and downstate – this is simply the right thing to do. I look forward to working with my colleagues in both houses and on both sides of the aisle to get this done this year,” **Krueger** said.

“Provides convenience to consumers. Check. Helps New York’s wineries and vineyards. Check. Limits sale of wine to only grocery stores – at most 1,900 locations – not the nearly 9,000 locations that currently sell beer. Check. It’s time to get this done. It’s time for wine, New York,” **Hunter** said.

Underage buying is a non-issue. Grocery stores already sell beer and hard cider and vigilantly require legitimate proof of age for these purchases. Everybody knows someone well over 21 who’s been asked for ID when buying beer. We also know from other states that liquor stores and supermarkets that sell wine not only can co-exist but thrive. In other states with laws most like the one we’re proposing, the number of liquor stores has increased.

Nelson Eusebio, Director of Government Relations, of the **National Supermarket Association**, said: “On behalf of the 600 independent grocers from Long Island to Brooklyn who make up our association, I strongly support this proposal. It will be great for our customers, who want the convenience, and for our independent store owners and their employees, who have been hit with so much during the pandemic and since. I look forward to working with our fellow independent small businesses to make this bill a reality this year.”

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