



UFCW 12R24 MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

BEER, WINE AND LIQUOR SALES

TORONTO (Dec. 19, 2013) – The following provides background facts and data from the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 12R24, which represents Ontario’s 7,000 Beer Store employees.

- Research was conducted Nov. 13-17, 2013, by Pollara Research of Toronto, which surveyed 1,008 Ontarians 18 years of age or older. It is considered accurate within plus or minus 3.1 percentage points, 19 times in 20. It found that if beer, wine and liquor was sold in Ontario convenience stores and gas stations:
 - More than half of Ontarians – 56 per cent – say crime would increase.
 - 58 per cent say alcohol abuse would increase.
 - 66 per cent of Ontarians oppose the sale of beer and wine and spirits in their local convenience store.
 - Three quarters (76 per cent) are satisfied with our current system for selling alcohol.
 - 81 per cent say there is already enough access to alcohol in retail outlets.
 - 85 per cent are satisfied with the current selection of brands.

ABOUT CONVENIENCE STORES AND GAS STATIONS

- We know that despite the best efforts of convenience store and gas station owners and operators, underage buyers are still purchasing cigarettes.
- For example in Kingston this past summer, the Public Health unit recently had charges laid against 22 convenience stores¹ found to be selling cigarettes to minors, and of those, 5 didn’t even ask for ID from a 17-year-old mystery shopper who was part of the investigation. The number of convenience stores selling cigarettes to minors actually increased in Kingston from a year ago.

¹ Kingston Public Health <http://www.kflapublichealth.ca/News.aspx?NId=259>

- Last week a report² by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) showed that only 1.2% of students in grades 7-12 said they bought beer at The Beer Store; but 15.6 per cent of those students reported they purchase cigarettes at convenience stores and gas stations.
- Studies by U.S. state regulators using mystery shoppers to check compliance of alcohol sales to minors showed a failure rate of up to 45 per cent in New York State and 30 per cent in Arizona. Most other states were in the 15 to 20 per cent failure range, which still means that about 1 in 5 minors can purchase alcohol.

CRIME

- Numerous U.S. academic studies prove that when the number of stores selling alcohol increases, crime and violence increases correspondingly.
- A 2011 U.S. study by two professors at Indiana University³ proved that when you increase the number of retail outlets selling liquor, violent assaults also increase. It stated: “There is substantial evidence of an association between alcohol outlets and assault... the results of this paper are compelling, suggesting that assaultive violence clusters around alcohol outlets.”
- The discussion underway now in many jurisdictions is about reducing the number of retail outlets that sell alcohol. Numerous studies from universities in Indiana, California, Maryland, and from think tanks such as the Pacific Institute – and from numerous countries as distant as New Zealand⁴ – show a direct link between liquor stores and crimes like murder, rape and assault⁵.
- Washington State privatized it’s liquor stores in 2012, and the result⁶ is: “Washington has seen a large uptick in liquor thefts and staggering price spikes, leading consumers to flock across the border to liquor-control states Oregon and Idaho for lower prices and better selection” according to UFCW Local 23 President Anthony Helfer.

WHAT WE KNOW

- UFCW 12R24 members recycle beer, wine and liquor containers: in total 2.1 Billion containers every year – half of all the blue box packaging collected in Ontario.

² CAMH <http://www.newswire.ca/en/story/1278179/is-smoking-cannabis-and-driving-the-new-drinking-and-driving>

³ Grubestic, Pridemore, <http://www.ij-healthgeographics.com/content/10/1/30>

⁴ Sunday Star Times <http://www.stuff.co.nz/sunday-star-times/latest-edition/6709260/Crime-doubles-close-to-liquor-outlets>

⁵ The Fix <http://www.thefix.com/content/liquor-store-violent-crime-compstat8751>

⁶ <http://triblive.com/opinion/letters/5157056-74/liquor-state-washington#axzz2nND0V5r7>

- If this packaging was in the Blue Box, taxpayers would be saddled with an estimated \$40 million additional annual cost.
- UFCW 12R24 members sell 400 brands available from 100 different brewers. More than 20 per cent of all brands sold in the Beer Store are brewed by small Ontario brewers.
- The Ontario government generates \$776 million annually on beer sales through TBS. Sales at the LCBO also generate another \$1.7 billion in tax revenues for the Ontario government.

SAFETY

- The Beer Store's Challenge and Refusal Program ("WE ID 25") ensures that minors or intoxicated individuals are not served.
- Beer Store employees routinely challenge in excess of 3.5 million individuals each year.
- All staff receive regular training on responsible sales practices.
- Stores are mystery shopped by a 3rd party company to assess compliance with corporate policies.
- Staff and store managers are monitored and evaluated on their challenge and refusal performance.

For more information:

Bill Walker 416-624-3936; bill@midtownpr.com