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STATE OF MICHIGAN  
LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING ON RULE CHANGE - R 436.1133

Proceedings had in the above-entitled case before Chairman Andrew Deloney and Commissioners Dennis Olshove and Teri Quimby, held at the Michigan Liquor Control Commission, 525 W. Allegan Street, Jacquelyn A. Stewart Hearing Room, Lansing, Michigan, on Wednesday, September 6, 2017.

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C O N T E N T S

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<u>SPEAKER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Gerry Hoffmann, Edison Neighborhood Assoc.	10
Laith Hajjar, Birmingham Wine, Inc.	12
Joel Smitter, Sr., Smitty's Specialty Beverage	13
Vikrant Bawa, Howard's Party Store	16
Satpal Singh, Lakeshore Market	17
Harpal Singh, Custer Party Store	18
Karamjit Singh, Karamjott Corporation	18
Jaspal Singh, Kilgore Spirit, LLC & Stockbridge Enterprise, LLC	19
Brennan Gorman, Brower VanderVeen, PLC	21
George Matti, Harvest Liquor Shop	23
Harpreet Multani, Quik N Ez Party Store	24
Auday Arabo, Associated Food & Petroleum Dealers	25
Naji Abdal, Abdaal & Jarbo, Inc.	29
Vikramjit Singh, VIK, Inc., L&L Market, Bourban Street, Beer City	30
Gurcharan Singh, M Brothers Inc.	34
Jason Canvasser, Clark Hill/Kroger & CVS	35
Zachary Collins, Joe's Party Store	36
Paul Makkar, Small Business Owners Assoc of MI	39
Rishi Makkar, United Small Business Owners Assoc.	41
Lisa Berry, L & B Kwik Stop & North Adams General Store	45
Steve Sheena, Home Town Beverage	47

1	<u>SPEAKER</u> (Continued):	<u>PAGE</u>
2	Kanwalbaljinder Sandhu, Plainfield Liquor, LLC	51
3	Nancy Mahlow, Eastside Neighborhood Organization	51
4	Ramzi Farah, BR Farah, Inc.	52
5	Stephen P. Ormond, Clark Hill/7-Eleven	53
6	Rita Ross, Russell Woods Neighborhood	55
7	Glenda McGadney, Russell Woods-Sullivan	
8	Area Association	56
9	Jerome Crete, Ideal Party Store, Inc.	56
10	Harpuran Singh, Baba Shri Chand, Inc.	58
11	Mike Mitchell, Markham Enterprises, Inc.	60
12	Paul DeBartolo, Real Estate Broker	62
13	Clifton Denha, Wine Palace	65
14		
15		
16		
17	<u>IN ATTENDANCE:</u>	
18	Kirandit Kaur, McNeil Street Market	
19	Paramjit Singh, Dimpny, Inc.	
20	Tarandeep Bhagtana, R. K. Liquor & Charleston Liquor	
21	Ramandeep Singh, 136th One Stop	
22	Sukhinder Singh, Baywood Party Store	
23	Gurvinder Singh, Liquor 1	
24	Manpreet Singh, Short Stop Depot Market	
25	Rigoberto Ramirez, Mahinder, Inc.	
	Jobal Singh, Stadium Liquor, Inc.	
	Gurmail Pelia, Singh Property, Inc.	
	Balwinder Kaur, Ghotra One, Inc.	
	Balwinder Singh, Juliano's C-Store of Flint	
	Ghulab Singh, Kamaljeet, Inc. & New Fox Party Store, LLC	
	Rajwinder Singh, Jackson Party Store	
	Jaspal Singh, K & J Market	
	Rajwant Kaur, Beadle Lake General Store	

1           IN ATTENDANCE: (Continued)

2           Charanjit Singh, Paramjot Ventures, LLC  
Lakhwinder Singh, Rozal, Inc.

3           Dominick Yousif, People's Food Market  
Gurpreet Singh, Round Lake Gas

4           Melvin Kajy, Delta Market Place Inc.  
Ram Singh, Sunset Market

5           Balbir Singh, Mandeep  
George Sharrak, Springwell Liquor Store

6           Paramjit Singh, Rana Foods, Inc.  
Srmad Batris, Babel Food Market, Easy Pick Food Market &

7                                 Seven Circles, Inc.  
Harjinder Singh, Sim's Market

8           Parmeet Singh, Mac's Food Fair  
Navleet Singh, Quick Pick Party Store

9           Jaswant Singh, One Stop Food Mart  
Daljit Singh, Inderjit Liquor, Inc. & Inder, Inc.

10          Sukhwinder Singh, Guru Mart, Inc., Inder, Inc., Meet, Inc.,  
                                  Raj-Winder, Inc.

11          Davinder Singh, U.S. Liquor, LLC  
Inderjit Singh, Ronit Multani, Inc.

12          Inderjit Singh-Shah, Danny's Beverage  
Inderjit Singh, Stockbridge Party Store

13          Sabbar Jarbou, Liquor Basket Party Store  
Manjinder Singh, Liquor King

14          Ghasse Zitouni, Circle Seven Food #2  
Bret Marr, Spartan Nash

15          Scott Joseph, Carl's Supermarket of Dimondale & Carl's  
Amy Drumm, Michigan Retailers Association

16          Kuldip Singh, Fox Island Party Store  
Kashmir Singh, K & K Liquor Inc., AKK Liquor, Kuljot LLC

17          Nazar Yelda, Village Liquor & Deli  
Mahabir Singh, Cheema, LLC, Midway Party Store, Hess Lake

18                                 Party Store  
Jasbir Singh, Waalkes Food Market

19          Mohinder Singh  
Saad Petros, Pop Top Liquor, Inc.

20          Nishan Singh, Kings Corner Market  
Balbir Singh, Village Party Store

21          Vinod Arora, Rider Enterprise, LLC  
Darshan S. Somal, Raman Party Store

22          Kashmir Singh, Shamrock Liquor Store  
Sandi Cotter, Dykema

23          Michael J. Brown, Carlin Edwards Brown  
John Doyle, Doyle Group Attorneys, P.C.

24          Ken Schulte, Associated Food & Petroleum Dealers  
David Puck, Michigan Licensed Beverage Association

25          Tom Abro, Sunshine Foods & Beverages

1           IN ATTENDANCE: (Continued)  
2           Daniel Knaggs, Knaggs Brake, PC  
          Kuldip Gill, Anoop Petroleum, LLC  
3           Mastan Singh, Raja Mart  
          Baljinder Singh, Shinda First, LLC  
4           Gurbinder Singh, Parmjot Ventures, LLC  
          Mukhwinder Singh, Hess Street, LLC  
5           Hardip Singh, Reet Inc.  
          Gurbinder Singh, Jay's Party Store, LLC  
6           Ashley Ligon, Clark Hill/ 7-Eleven, Inc.  
          Avtar Singh, Liberty Food Center  
7           Gurpreet Singh, Sital Party Store, LLC  
          Pawanjit Singh, J & B Discount Liquor & Bartender's Stop  
8           Bhag Singh, MMCII, Inc.  
          Charanjit Singh, Paramjot Ventures, LLC  
9           Harpal Singh, Old Liberty Food Mart, Inc.  
          Deedar Singh, Mega Corp of Muskegon, LLC  
10          Matt Miner, Associated Food & Petroleum Dealers  
          Haytham Jarbou, Roseville Party Store  
11          Karim Jarbo, Jarbo & Abro, Inc., Richmond Ventures, Inc.,  
  Jarbo Family, Inc., Jarbo & Yatoma, Inc.  
12          Ghazwan Abdul, NKG Business, Inc.  
          Louis Denha, Wine Palace  
13          Sudaaid Yatooma, Sterling Liquor, Inc.  
          Amandeep Multani, Multani Investments  
14          Sukhinderbir Singh, Boardwalk Party Store, Inc.  
          Don Nunn, Meijer  
15          Kawaljit Singh, Riverside Liquors  
          Balvinder Singh, Byron Liquor  
16          Satnam Singh, Tiny Giant Store  
          Fateh Singh, Badalia Brothers LLC  
17          Lakhwinder Singh, Borculo Liquor LLC  
          Kulwinder Singh, Algoma Liquor, LLC & 4 Mile Liquor, LLC  
18          Suresh Bhargava, Praal, Inc.  
          Pawanpreet Singh, Japnoor, Inc.  
19          Talat Shamo  
          Gorav, Inc.  
20          Manjit Singh, Maninder, LLC  
          Joydeep Singh, Star Singh, LLC  
21          Abrehet E. Joseph, Partytime Party Store  
          Freweini Kahasay, Party Cooler, Inc.  
22          Tewelde Bahta, Top Shelf Spirits  
          Hari Singh, Ghotra, Inc.  
23          Baljinder Singh, Jimmy Short Stop, Inc.  
          Nick DeBartolo, Real Estate Broker  
24          Bryce Abdal, Buscemi's of Ann Arbor, Inc.  
          Andrew Martin, Meijer  
25          Baljit Kaur, J & K Party Store & Harry's Corner  
          Gurbachan Singh, J & K Party Store & Raus Beverage

1           IN ATTENDANCE: (Continued)

2           Mehar Chauhan, Swaran & Sons Inc.  
3           Avin Yelda, Victory Liquor & Food Store  
4           Eddie Patros, Kelly Corner Party Store  
5           Surinder Singh, Grandville Party Store, LLC  
6           Randhir Billing, Billing Corporation  
7           Jetinder Kaur, Airline Spirit, LLC  
8           Arvinder Singh, Hari's Party Store, Inc.  
9           Jatinderpal Kaur Palia, Sappers LLC  
10          Ajay Sehgal, Sehgal Enterprises, LLC  
11          Greenwood Food & Beverage  
12          Amrinderpal Singh, Airport Party Store  
13          A. Ghotra, Pardesh, Inc.  
14          Bachan Ghotra, Pardesh, Inc.  
15          Sarabjit Kaur, Norton Shores Liquors, LLC  
16          Fuljinder Singh, Isha Ozzie, LLC  
17          Baljit Singh, JB-Hoyt Corp  
18          Surinder Ghotra, Laketon Marathon  
19          Bakhshish Singh, 838 Penn, LLC & L&G Eastwood, LLC  
20          Harbhajan Multani, DN's Party Store & M G Limited  
21          Khattar Singh, Springfield Party Store  
22          Ravinder Kaur, Star Foods & Liquor Corporation  
23          Alka Bhargava, Praal, Inc.  
24          Jason Kajy, Kennedy Liquor & Deli Shoppe, Inc.  
25          Nahidah Meiou, MEIOU, Inc. d/b/a Starr Mart Food Store  
26          Tom Meyer, North Adams General Store  
27          Karnail Singh, Downtown Party Store  
28          Franci Sitto, MTown Liquor, Inc.  
29          Dhiya Dabish, Vintage Village Fine Wine  
30          Bashar Arabo, Pointe Park Party Store  
31          Brian S. Yaldao, Hills Fine Wine & Spirits  
32          Kulwant Singh, Raman, Inc., Kyogis, Inc., Alpine Liquor  
33          G. Singh, Daler, Inc.  
34          Bimal Singh, Mukh and Ravi, Inc.  
35          Paul's Pantry  
36          Yacoub (Jake) Mio, Park Place Liquor  
37          Kulwant Singh, Royal Liquor  
38          Harmail Singh, Overseas-Urban, LLC & Kaala Mehr, LLC  
39          Sukhraj Singh, Cedar Rock General Store & Alpine Liquor, Inc.

40           \*\*Five unidentifiable attendees

41           STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

42           Terri Chase, Commission Aide  
43           Steve Creamer, Deputy Director, Executive Services  
44           Lori DeClercq, Court Reporter  
45           Anita Fawcett, Secretary to Chairman  
46           Kerry Krone, Business Manager

1            STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:(Continued)

2            Don McGehee, Attorney General Office  
3            Megan Minnick, Licensing Division  
4            Marsha Perilloux, Enforcement Division  
5            Barb Subastian, Regional Supervisor, Enforcement Division  
6            Sara Weber, Director, Licensing Division  
7            Julie Wendt, Director, Executive Services  
8            Julie Wiles, Insurance/Renewal Unit

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1                   Lansing, Michigan

2                   Wednesday, September 6, 2017 - 1:05 p.m.

3                   CHAIRMAN DELONEY: We will call this hearing of the  
4 Michigan Liquor Control Commission to order. This public  
5 hearing is called to order at -- the clock shows 1:04 p.m.,  
6 on September 6, 2017 at the offices of the Michigan Liquor  
7 Control Commission in Lansing, Michigan.

8                   You do have a forum of the Commission present.  
9 Commissioner Olshove, Commissioner Quimby and myself,  
10 Commissioner Deloney, are present.

11                   This hearing is called in compliance with Sections  
12 41 and 42 of Act No. 369 of the Public Acts of 1969, as  
13 amended, and under the authority of Section 215 of Act No. 58  
14 of the Public Acts of 1998, as amended, which authorizes the  
15 Commission to adopt rules governing the carrying out of this  
16 Act and the duties and responsibilities of licensees in the  
17 proper conduct of their licensed businesses.

18                   This public hearing is being held to obtain the  
19 input and views of the general public and interested parties  
20 concerning the rescission of Licensing Qualification Rule  
21 R 436.1133, which limits the distance between specially  
22 designated distributor licenses to not less than 2,640 feet,  
23 except under certain conditions where the Commission may  
24 waive this prohibition.

25                   The Commission submitted a Request for Rulemaking



1 to the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs on  
2 May 8, 2017 for review. This request was approved by the  
3 Office of Regulatory Reinvention on May 17 of 2017.

4 The office -- excuse me -- the Notice of Public  
5 Hearing was published in the Traverse City Record Eagle on  
6 August 21, 2017, in the Grand Rapids Press on August 22,  
7 2017, and in the Marquette Mining Journal on August 23 of  
8 2017. The Notice was also published in the Michigan Register  
9 on September 1, 2017. In addition, the Notice of Public  
10 Hearing and the Regulatory Impact Statement was posted on the  
11 Commission website on August 10, 2017.

12 Those who are here to make comments at this public  
13 hearing, please make sure you have signed in, indicating your  
14 willingness to speak. There is a court reporter present  
15 today to make a record of the hearing. Therefore, please  
16 state your name and the organization you represent, if any,  
17 before giving your presentation. If you have any additional  
18 comments to submit in writing, please make sure they are  
19 received by Julie Wendt of the Commission staff or by the  
20 Commission by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 13, 2017.  
21 Again, any additional comments that anyone wishes to submit  
22 in writing, please make sure that they are received by the  
23 Commission no later than 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday,  
24 September 13, 2017.

25 Because of the number of people who have asked to

1 provide an oral statement today, and due to other schedule  
2 obligations, comments will be limited to two minutes and the  
3 hearing will conclude by 4:00 p.m. This Commission has  
4 noticed this meeting pursuant to the Administrative  
5 Procedures Act and the Open Meetings Act and provided this  
6 hearing room today for the purpose of accommodating the  
7 public. Finally, based on the number of people wanting to  
8 speak, we would encourage if there are groups,  
9 representatives or associations, organizations, to assign  
10 spokespersons to present comments.

11 With that being stated, we will call people to make  
12 comments. We will start with -- I will apologize in advance  
13 if I mispronounce anyone's name. Gerry Hoffmann? Please  
14 come forward.

15 MR. HOFFMANN: My name is Gerry Hoffmann, President  
16 of Edison Neighborhood Association of Kalamazoo. We have  
17 10,000 people who are not happy about this. As a matter of  
18 fact, my tie has a little voting booth and outside of the  
19 voting booth is the words that say: "I am mad as hell and I  
20 am not going to take this anymore." The idea of pumping more  
21 alcohol into our streets is just insane. If you talk to any  
22 public service -- public safety officer, they will tell you  
23 this is where crime happens -- prostitution, drugs -- right  
24 at the liquor store. Now it is not so bad if you have like a  
25 Meijer or something like that that sells a lot of other

1       stuff, but to have a lot of little tiny liquor stores, you  
2       are just asking for trouble. You are also, of course, making  
3       it a lot easier for kids to get booze. You are making it too  
4       much of a temptation for adults who have a problem. Last  
5       year, I helped to fight a liquor store that was going to be  
6       put in my neighborhood. It was a football field away from an  
7       elementary school and right across the street from a  
8       substance abuse center; that is like just asking for trouble.  
9       I brought a map today to show you my neighborhood. As a  
10      matter of fact, I can hand it to you and you can take a look  
11      at it. I live right -- this is only a half-mile by a little  
12      more than a half-mile section of our city. I live right in  
13      the middle of it. So, within a half-mile of my house, there  
14      is Howard's Liquor Store, two blocks away; across the street,  
15      there is a beer and wine store; half-mile north of that,  
16      there is On the Rocks Liquor; half-mile northeast is Mills  
17      Street Liquor; about a half-mile to the east, there is Jack's  
18      Liquor. Also, about a half-mile east is Hays Park Liquor;  
19      half-mile to the west is J & B Liquor; two blocks south of  
20      me, is a store that sells beer and wine; about a half-mile  
21      southeast, there is a Citgo that also sells beer and wine.  
22      Less than a mile away, there is also Paul's Liquor; about a  
23      mile is Corkscrew Liquor and another beer and wine store.  
24      All totaled from this, this map shows six liquor stores a  
25      half-mile from my house and three beer and wine stores. But

1           that map is a year out of date. Since then, you have allowed  
2           two more beer and wine stores; one of which was a Dollar  
3           General -- just insane. I guess the bottom line is we  
4           already have way too much liquor and I am asking you to keep  
5           the half-mile rule. But I am also asking you to enforce it  
6           because I read in Crane's that that is part of the reason  
7           that the Commission wants to get rid of it is because you are  
8           not enforcing it anyway. Do the job. Your job is to protect  
9           us. My neighborhood is in danger because of what you are  
10          trying to do here and I ask you just to do your job. Thank  
11          you.

12                         CHAIRMAN DELONEY: The next matter -- I can't read  
13          the writing, but the address they indicated was 300 E.  
14          Michigan in Three Rivers. I apologize. I can't read the  
15          name. Someone who indicated their address of 300 E. Michigan  
16          in Three Rivers indicated a desire to speak.

17                         UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: We don't want to speak.

18                         CHAIRMAN DELONEY: This person is not coming  
19          forward. Again, I apologize.

20                         UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: Can you spell the name?

21                         CHAIRMAN DELONEY: I can't decipher the letters.  
22          Next is Laith Hajjar. Laith Hajjar?

23                         MR. HAJJAR: Yes. Hello, everyone. My name is  
24          Laith Hajjar. I have a business in Birmingham at 33644  
25          Woodward Avenue. I am totally against what I read in the

1 paper about the notice of approving the half-mile rules. The  
2 reason is if you look at the whole picture, you see a lot of,  
3 you know, low income communities going to suffer a lot. If I  
4 have a business that is in the low income community, I will  
5 take a chance of this law and I will move it to the medium to  
6 high income community. So what is going to happen is -- what  
7 is going to happen to these buildings? How you guys going to  
8 sustain the economy in low income communities? I mean, I  
9 think it is a bad move for the Commission to approve and get  
10 rid of the half-mile rules and just keep it the way it is in  
11 force and that is how you keep the economy level. I  
12 understand, you know, the Liquor Control Commission is a part  
13 of the economic, you know, organization and you guys have to  
14 look into it thoroughly and what I see, you know, I am sorry  
15 to say that we are in a world of, you know, lobbyists. I  
16 know there is a lot of -- few people who owns or has a big  
17 connection with gas stations. They are trying to approve  
18 this. And they are trying to pump Lotto money into lobbying  
19 and having this approved. This is wrong and this is what I  
20 feel about it, you know. Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Thank you. Next is Joel  
22 Smmitter, Sr.

23 MR. SMITTER: Good afternoon. Guess I'm a little  
24 wired. Good afternoon. I am here again to represent  
25 Smitty's Speciality Beverage and hopefully, all of the

1 licensees, here, in the State of Michigan where my campaign  
2 as being, please, what allowed the council to think that they  
3 could overturn a rule on the books without first having a  
4 vote on it? We, as liquor store owners, bought our  
5 businesses not because we just wanted to sell liquor. It is  
6 because we wanted to create something. After 35 years of  
7 pouring my blood, sweat and tears into my business -- as  
8 several of these people have done for many, many years -- we  
9 were afforded a promise from the State that we wouldn't have  
10 competition within a half-mile of us. What does that do?  
11 That makes our property, our license, worth more value. Then  
12 we can turn around and invest into our community and to our  
13 business to further it and become bigger and stronger. By  
14 the Commission allowing everyone to have a little more piece  
15 of the pie, you are doing nothing to increase the profits in  
16 the State of Michigan. In fact, it is probably going to come  
17 back and bite everyone in the butt because each community is  
18 only going to sell so much booze. If we have to even that up  
19 by having five liquor stores in our community, we are under  
20 the -- the community is going to purchase as much, we are  
21 going to have to lay off people. You're going to have less  
22 sales tax. You're going to have less employment taxes coming  
23 in; just all the way across the board, things are going to  
24 hurt because each individual, as they buy their liquor  
25 license for a song -- because now you are destroying the

1 value of our liquor licenses -- they are going to turn around  
2 and open up and they will probably have one person, two  
3 people. Well, then, that takes from us and then we have to  
4 turn around and lay off people. I don't know where you live,  
5 but I know in our community in Grand Rapids, Michigan and  
6 East Town in East Grand Rapids, we have already fought to  
7 rescind the approval of the beer and wine in that community;  
8 that no one followed the rules by filling out the paperwork,  
9 sending it to all the neighboring businesses and it just kind  
10 of snuck right in. Well, I am grateful that our community  
11 said whoa, we don't need anymore beer, wine, liquor stores in  
12 our community. They then filed and went to the -- it was the  
13 city and had it all revoked and removed so these -- this  
14 action on your part, apparently, gave this company some hope  
15 -- this gas station some hope. All right. Beer and wine, we  
16 can sell. They invest in doing everything that they had to  
17 do to get the license approved and the product installed and  
18 then all of sudden, boom, now they just lost it all because  
19 you guys didn't follow the rules and didn't get permission  
20 from that community and pulled the license right out from  
21 underneath their feet.

22 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Sir, you need to be wrapping up  
23 your comments.

24 MR. SMITTER: Wrapping up my comments is we need  
25 you to enforce the protection that we were promised. We

1 don't need box stores moving in and this is what is going to  
2 happen: These box stores are going to say now we don't have  
3 to worry about this little liquor license over here. We are  
4 well within a half-mile. We are going to open up and here  
5 comes another Costco, Meijer, Sam's Club, and they sell  
6 everything at cost. How are we going to fight that, except  
7 for going out of business? Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Next is Vik Bawa.

9 MR. BAWA: Good afternoon. My name is Vik Bawa,  
10 representing the Howard's Party Store from Kalamazoo. I am  
11 totally against this rescinding the half-mile rule because of  
12 all the reasons everybody said. It is not going to help any  
13 of the small businesses, except big box store. Big box store  
14 can be right now can be next door to Joe's Liquor and they  
15 can have liquor license, but small business can't afford to  
16 stay in business and feed their families. Allowing  
17 rescinding this half-mile rule, next door can be Walgreen,  
18 Family Dollar, Dollar General. They get the liquor license,  
19 small businesses are closed. Their values will be half or  
20 less than that so everything that people have worked for --  
21 and that is the American dream -- everybody works for it.  
22 Everybody still works for American dream, having their own  
23 business. State of Michigan is the only state that allows  
24 this protection of half-mile. You take that away, we don't  
25 have anything. State of Michigan will lose more population



1 for small businesses than anybody else. That is where I  
2 stand. Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Thank you. Next is Harpuran  
4 Singh. Harpuran Singh? Is Harpuran Singh present? Harpuran  
5 Singh? Again, I apologize if I am mispronouncing anyone's  
6 name. Last call for Harpuran Singh. If not, I will put it  
7 at the end, here, and see if that person is here and does  
8 wish to speak.

9 Next is Satpal Singh.

10 MR. SATPAL SINGH: Here.

11 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Please come forward.

12 MR. SATPAL SINGH: Hello. I am Satpal Singh from  
13 Kalamazoo and I am representing the Lake Shore Market in  
14 Portage. As everybody knows, that there is no need of  
15 changing this rule. We were to request you not to change it  
16 without public consent. It will create a lot of problems for  
17 the existing businesses, unnecessary competition. Right now,  
18 it is hard for a lot of small businesses to survive.

19 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Hold on a second, sir. What is  
20 the issue? From a technical perspective, what is it?

21 MS. KRONE: Try that.

22 (Microphone issue.)

23 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: I apologize, sir. Please  
24 continue.

25 MR. SATPAL SINGH: It will create unnecessary

1 competition and profit margins will shrink and a lot of  
2 people will have to close their doors and they will lose  
3 their livelihood, as well as employment for a lot of people  
4 will be destroyed. So we would like -- I don't think there  
5 is any need to make more licenses available within half-mile.  
6 Half mile is not too far of a distance for anybody to fetch  
7 anything. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Thank you. Next is Harpal  
9 Singh.

10 MR. HARPAL SINGH: Hi, everyone. My name is Harpal  
11 Singh. I am from Battle Creek. And I am totally against  
12 this law. Already, the business -- because it is -- my store  
13 I have four lane across the street. Somebody already opened  
14 a store and already lost that and I don't want you guys do  
15 this rule against. So I am against this law. That is it.  
16 Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Thank you. Next is Harmail  
18 Singh? Harmail Singh? 318 E. Emmett Street, Battle Creek.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He want to pass.

20 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Say that again, sir?

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He don't want to speak.

22 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: He does not wish to speak?

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Skip.

24 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Next is Karamjit Singh.

25 MR. KARAMJIT SINGH: Good afternoon, everybody. My

1 name is Karamjit Singh. I own the Cedar Rock General Store  
2 located on 14 Mile Road at Rockford. I am doing business  
3 there almost from 20 years. So my liquor store is located  
4 between two gas stations. They both have obtained a beer  
5 license after this date and allowed gas station to do so. I  
6 have lost almost 25 to 30 percent of business and earning  
7 because of this. So now if the Liquor Control Commission  
8 gets a law to change the half-mile rule, both these gas  
9 stations will definitely get a liquor license. This will be  
10 completely devastating for me and it will ruin my business  
11 and I will not be able to compete with them. So I am 50  
12 years old and I have been working hard for the past 20 years.  
13 I have undergone three back surgeries after my car accident  
14 in 2001. So despite this, I still have been working and I do  
15 not wish to become a burden on the Michigan State. So I  
16 humbly request for not to change that half-mile rule and to  
17 respect small business owners like me and many others here  
18 today. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Thank you. Next is Jaspal  
20 Singh. Jaspal Singh?

21 MR. JASPAL SINGH: Good afternoon. My name is  
22 Jaspal Singh. I am from Kalamazoo, Michigan. I am doing  
23 this business almost 24 years. And this rule been made and  
24 there is need for it. Half-mile rule, there was reason for  
25 it. Why they have half-mile rule and why they changing it?

1 I think it is already too close -- half-mile not even enough  
2 to open another store and you by taking the other two, that  
3 is not fair for all these people in here; should be at least  
4 a mile. Have you ever heard or anybody who request or  
5 application to Liquor Control Commission: I have to drive  
6 too far to get liquor? Nobody. None. If there is, I would  
7 like to see that application or request.

8 And second is, you guys giving this opportunity few  
9 people, maybe those people want to open the store and more  
10 competition and other people are going to go out of business.  
11 So you want these people who struggling that many years  
12 during this business; leave them in the business; let them  
13 survive or let other people come, take them out of business.  
14 And how hard it is to survive this day on this business, you  
15 guys have no clue. You guys make 70 percent on liquor  
16 already, including the price. I know that. We pay another  
17 six percent. There comes 76 percent profit. Of course, you  
18 like to reopen other liquor stores. Maybe tomorrow you open  
19 a lot of liquor licenses. Hey, anybody can have liquor  
20 license; come on; because you make 76 percent. We make 15  
21 percent. Cigarette pack, it cost 35 cents a pack. State  
22 make \$3; manufacturer make \$3. We make 70 cents and we do  
23 all the work. Every single individual pack, if we get  
24 busted, we got to pay the fine. Same with liquor. You make  
25 \$3,500 out of me every week. You are happy. Of course, you

1 will be happy. So, I think this rule should stay as is and  
2 should be change the rule to be less than nobody open less  
3 than a mile. Because all the stores already on the edge.  
4 They are half-mile or little bit, three-quarter mile. They  
5 already way too many stores. Liquor price should mention  
6 what the Liquor Control should do instead of changing this  
7 law half-mile. Liquor should be 25 percent. It hasn't been  
8 changed in 20 years; same price. The Lottery Commission, six  
9 percent, been 24 years. The --

10 COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry, sir. The what?

11 UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: The wages.

12 MR. JASPAL SINGH: The wages \$4 now to \$4.50. The  
13 Lottery Commission was six percent. It should be doubled  
14 because everything been doubled, it should be doubled.  
15 Liquor should be at least 25 percent. Cigarettes should be,  
16 set the price 20 percent so we can survive. We are barely  
17 surviving, here. Because allow the fact, maybe -- maybe 25,  
18 35 percent of people be out of business. I am totally  
19 strongly against it and everybody -- does not matter if they  
20 come here and speak it or not -- everybody is against this  
21 rule. So, please, do your best to be not let this happen.  
22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Next is Brennen Gorman. Brennen  
24 Gorman?

25 MR. GORMAN: Good afternoon. My name is Brennen

1 Gorman. I am a liquor attorney. I work with businesses  
2 frequently to help get liquor licenses. I am in support of  
3 this rescission. I believe that the rule itself is obsolete  
4 and I think it is also discriminatory against any new  
5 applicants. This was a rule that was established more than  
6 20 years ago and in the time since, there has been plenty of  
7 exceptions that have been carved out to it and I believe at  
8 this point, the amount of exceptions that have been carved  
9 out have made the rule rather null and void. Now, instead of  
10 the majority being barred from the half mile, it is the  
11 minority that is, in fact, barred because more often than  
12 not, they can find an exception to the half-mile rule itself.  
13 I think it is discriminatory because at the end of the day,  
14 it is an absolute protection against any new business that  
15 might want to go in, whether it is, as mentioned, a box  
16 store; whether it is a local mom and pop shop. Regardless of  
17 the existing licensee's status, whether there are violations,  
18 whether the building itself has become run down over 20, 30  
19 years of service and knowing that they have an absolute  
20 protection in that half-mile area, this would encourage  
21 competition to rescind it and ultimately it will be better  
22 off for the State itself. Ultimately, it is not as though  
23 there is going to be more liquor licenses as a result of this  
24 change. There is still a quoted amount of liquor licenses  
25 available in each municipality and under the changes, under

1 the amount that could be transferred within the county.  
2 There will be some effect as a result, to be sure, but I  
3 think, indeed, in the grand scheme of the change, it will be  
4 a positive one. Thank you.

5 (Unidentified voices booing.)

6 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: No public demonstrations,  
7 please. Paramjit Singh? Paramjit Singh?

8 UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: Skip.

9 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Paramjit Singh, is he present?

10 UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: Skip.

11 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: He might be out in the hall.  
12 Paramjit Singh? Not hearing back from Paramjit Singh, we  
13 will move on to the next one, George Matti.

14 MR. MATTI: My name is George Matti. I have a  
15 store in Ypsilanti, Michigan. We bought it 15 years ago.  
16 There is three gas stations around the corner from me, a  
17 hundred yards away. One was trying to get a liquor license  
18 last year and you guys denied them because of the half mile  
19 rule. You guys gave them a beer and wine instead and if you  
20 guys rescind this rule, the other three gas stations -- the  
21 other two gas stations will probably all have liquor  
22 licenses, which is only 150 yards away from me. We bought  
23 this store 15 years ago. I just turned 70 years old and I  
24 was hoping to leave it with my two sons that are working with  
25 me and if I leave it with them, they are going to not have a

1 very profitable liquor store and they are not going to make  
2 as much money for their family as they are barely making it  
3 now and it will be not so good for their future and my future  
4 is almost done, so I was hoping to leave it with them at a  
5 profitable pace, which is not going to happen if you guys  
6 rescind this rule and that is my comment and that is all I  
7 have to say.

8 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Thank you. Next is Harpreet  
9 Multani.

10 MR. MULTANI: I am Harpreet Multani from Quik N Ez  
11 Party Store on Plainfield. And I talked to a lot of my, you  
12 know, police guys live around our store and they say, you  
13 know, crime is going up and myself was robbed two months ago  
14 from gun point and they can't find them. They are coming to  
15 the clubs and emptying their hands and crime is going up. In  
16 the old neighborhood, very good; 20 years I have this store  
17 and never happen things. I never call the police and crime  
18 is going break ins and people buy the booze; all they are  
19 trying to buy and that will -- if you start a new rule, then  
20 we will have everybody out of business. All the gas  
21 stations, everywhere, across the street, people are getting  
22 licenses then we will be done. Hard work and we have to make  
23 money. We have to live. We have to pay mortgage and  
24 everything and we will be out of business and how we going to  
25 feed our family? So I will request you, please don't use new



1 law and thank you, sir.

2 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Thank you. Next is Auday Arabo.

3 MR. ARABO: Good afternoon, Chairman, Members of  
4 the Commission. My name is Auday Arabo. I am the President  
5 and CEO of AFPD. I want to thank you for this hearing. It  
6 is unfortunate that we actually had to sue the State to  
7 actually have this hearing. That being said, for the record  
8 purposes, we really want to make sure that this Commission  
9 has no bias one way or another and really gets to listen to  
10 everybody in this room, whether they are for or against it.  
11 Because in talking to a lot of these people beforehand, they  
12 really feel that you are not here to listen. So you may have  
13 your strong opinions on the issue. I just ask you to have an  
14 open mind on the issue.

15 We have been around since 1910, 107 years old. We  
16 actually have members that actually support the rescission.  
17 The majority of our members oppose the rescission. We are  
18 here to oppose the rescission because we think we should not  
19 throw the baby out with the bath water; that is why we  
20 actually have a solution in the House and the Senate. There  
21 are a number of reasons you should keep the half-mile rule in  
22 place. First of all, it's been around since 1979. This is  
23 the first Commission in 38 years to ever even think about  
24 abolishing it, number one.

25 Number two, we have not seen any objective policy

1 reasons why you would like to get rid of this and I will go  
2 through some of your arguments you listed previously.

3 Number three, most importantly, in December of  
4 2013, this Commission -- Chairman Deloney and Commissioner  
5 Olshove -- signed off on the declaratory ruling in the Holly  
6 Foods case, declaring how great the half-mile rule is. That  
7 decision was challenged in the Ingham County court system.  
8 At that time, Judge Canady came out and said this rule is not  
9 discriminatory and is right for the state.

10 Another issue I have heard or I have read some of  
11 your articles that there is a conflict with the new statute  
12 2016. We were part of that group that actually helped draft  
13 that statute that you refer to and number two, if you read  
14 this morning's paper, Senator Jones, who is the author of  
15 that bill, came out and said this is not the interpretation  
16 that we had when we passed that bill. I am not sure where  
17 you got your interpretation from. I'd like to -- I hope you  
18 actually talk to your Attorney General's office, but we are  
19 actually considering asking the Attorney General for his own  
20 ruling on where the conflict stands.

21 I have heard, also, protectionist. The word --  
22 these liquor store owners are protectionists. You have 4,500  
23 licenses in the State of Michigan. We also do business in  
24 Ohio. There's 400 licenses in the State of Ohio. There is  
25 no such thing as protectionist on the half-mile rule. These

1 men and women have put their life savings in these stores  
2 based on a system that was in front of them. It's been in  
3 front of them for 38 years and now you just want to pull the  
4 rug out from underneath them without -- not just due process,  
5 but an open hearing process. And I have heard, also, some  
6 saying, well, we have a quota in place. Well, the quota is  
7 not to increase licenses. But you are wrong. It is an  
8 increase -- geographic -- geographic saturation because what  
9 happens is, there is a hot corner and now we're going to have  
10 four stores on every corner and when you say they can't move,  
11 well, they can move. A couple years ago -- you have a county  
12 transfer system so I can move within the county. So great  
13 example is the City of Howell, where they are supposed to  
14 have eight or nine licenses, but I can move anywhere now from  
15 Livingston County and place it in Howell and now Howell is  
16 oversaturated because the quota counts against where it  
17 originated, not where it's actually placed. So to say  
18 they're not going to cause a saturation, is really being  
19 dishonest. Some areas are going to be oversaturated. Some  
20 areas will not have service. There is a fix to it. We  
21 believe our House Bill is the fix. We still have open arms  
22 and hope you actually agree with that. We are set to have a  
23 hearing on that very soon. We have been working with the  
24 Governor's office on this issue, as well, and really want you  
25 to, kind of, take this to heart. There is a reason that 70

1 percent of all the spirits sold in the state today is done by  
2 small business owners. This has a huge small business impact  
3 if you actually rescind the rule. These people, like I said,  
4 they don't have 401(k)s or a retirement plan. Their store is  
5 their retirement plan.

6 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Mr. Arabo, you are at your two  
7 minutes so please try to wrap up your comments.

8 MR. ARABO: I will. Thank you. Just in closing, I  
9 would like to just really talk about what I understand as  
10 free competition. You cannot talk about free competition in  
11 a system that is closed. Every one of these licenses, if you  
12 want to see how much they purchased from the State, it is  
13 online. So I could go see Rishi, here, in Grand Rapids. He  
14 has this much business and I could open up a store next to  
15 him. So don't talk about free competition on one end by  
16 getting rid of the half-mile rule and then keep State  
17 controls on the other end. You want free competition, let's  
18 abolish the MLCC. Let's abolish the entire system and go to  
19 an open system. So we don't think that is really being up  
20 front.

21 So thank you for your consideration and we strongly  
22 urge you -- our 3,000 members strongly urge you to keep this  
23 rule in place. It is not broken. Liquor licenses -- liquor  
24 sales are up. M-Live actually had an article two weeks ago  
25 that showed every man, woman and child in the State of

1 Michigan can drink up to eight drinks a week in terms of the  
2 value and the sales that the State does. We know it is a  
3 cash cow. Don't break the system when it is not broke.  
4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Next is Naji Abdal. Naji Abdal?

6 MR. ABDAL: My name is Naji Abdal, Abdaal & Jarbo.  
7 When we bought our business, everybody here when he buy his  
8 business, he was depending on this rule. You know, that  
9 there is half-mile, nobody can open another business close to  
10 him. So we paid money for that. Not only we depend on it  
11 and we pay extra money for that because we know nobody will  
12 come and open beside my store. Other thing: What will  
13 happen if somebody come and open close to me, beside me,  
14 within quarter mile or less beside my store? For sure, he  
15 going to get half of my business. If that happens, believe  
16 me, we are going to close the door. I work -- me and my  
17 family, seven persons for seven years, to make some money to  
18 do this business. I am not all of the business; half of the  
19 business, I got a partner. So how can I lose this business?  
20 This business is making living for my family. How can I send  
21 my children to the college? Who going to pay for tuition?  
22 How am I going to pay for my mortgage? How can I pay for all  
23 these taxes? Everybody know how is paying them. So I don't  
24 know. Why they want to change it? There is no big reason to  
25 change it. Now half-mile -- it was one mile. Now they make

1           it half-mile. It is okay. We depend on that half-mile. So  
2           why do they want to change this over? Please keep this rule  
3           because we want to keep making living to our families from  
4           this business. We cannot lose it. For sure, we cannot lose  
5           it. If we lose it, we going to lose our homes. We cannot  
6           lose too many things in our life, so please keep this rule.  
7           Thank you.

8                         CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Thank you. Next is Vikramjit  
9           Singh. Vikramjit Singh?

10                        MR. VIKRAMJIT SINGH: Sorry; coming. My name is  
11           Vik Singh and I am from Grand Rapids. I currently own and  
12           operate two liquor stores with SDD licenses and I am  
13           currently developing my third.

14                        I believe in the development and stability of  
15           everyone's business or businesses. The half-mile rule has  
16           played a very strong role in determining where we may or may  
17           not open an establishment with an SDD license. Not allowing  
18           strong concentrations of SDD licenses in any given  
19           geographical area has been a staple rule in determining where  
20           new SDD licensed establishments open. We have all been  
21           following this rule and for this rule to be terminated at the  
22           state level, will mean an open market for anyone to relocate  
23           or open a new shop elsewhere. For those who operate high  
24           volume locations, this rule especially affects them. If I  
25           decide tomorrow to transfer my SDD license adjacent to one of

1 these high-volume stores, I am now posing a risk and creating  
2 more competition to this already competitive market.

3 I quote this from the Michigan website of the  
4 Office of Performance and Transformation, also known as OPT:

5 "The mission of the Office of Regulatory  
6 Reinvention (ORR) is to simplify Michigan's  
7 regulatory environment by reducing  
8 obsolete, unnecessary and burdensome rules  
9 that are limiting economic growth."

10 I personally feel that the termination of the  
11 half-mile rule does not fit in with this mission statement or  
12 their guidelines. The half-mile rule is not obsolete because  
13 established businesses depend on this rule to ensure their  
14 stability and that another competitor will not open up next  
15 door or across the street from them. I feel it is necessary  
16 to avoid an abundance of SDD licensees within any given area.  
17 The rule allows certain distances to be maintained between  
18 licensees and this prevents extensive competition between  
19 them. Fortunately, Michigan has a state minimum for pricing,  
20 allowing everyone to be at a fair and level playing field.  
21 For example, if the state minimum were to be rescinded as  
22 well, it would create cut throat competition and unfair  
23 business practices. For those who have smaller  
24 establishments, this could mean the possible risk of not  
25 being able to compete amongst their competitors and could

1 even result in establishments closing or relocating. The  
2 rule also is not burdensome to economic growth. I feel, in a  
3 sense, it promotes economic growth by not allowing  
4 concentrations of SDD licensees within any area. It promotes  
5 new SDD licensees to invest in areas that otherwise do not  
6 have establishments. If the rule was to ultimately be  
7 terminated, it would allow for concentrations of these  
8 licenses in any given area. Investors and businessmen would  
9 be more inclined to open shops in areas that are already  
10 developed, not allowing for the spread of growth and  
11 development. The ORR is responsible for rescinding over  
12 2,122 obsolete and burdensome rules, as stated on their  
13 website, since April of 2011. Only 15 MLCC rules have been  
14 rescinded. This accounts for .70 percent, not even 1 percent  
15 of the rules rescinded have been MLCC rules. I believe the  
16 MLCC does a good job changing with times and writing  
17 regulations as we see a diversifying and growing economy, but  
18 I do not believe that removing Rule 436.1133 is something the  
19 MLCC should do. I believe it is one of the biggest changes  
20 to its Code out of all the past changes and rescission of  
21 rules.

22 Alcohol is a \$6 billion industry in Michigan and it  
23 is still growing. If MLCC were to terminate the half-mile  
24 rule, SDD licensees would start migrating to denser, more  
25 populated areas. Bars and stores with SDD licenses have



1 their previous year and year to date purchases available to  
2 view online and to the public. This would, in turn, cause  
3 smaller SDD licensees who may not be doing so well to be  
4 motivated to move and not compete with high volume stores.

5 The following is written on the public notice for  
6 this meeting and I quote:

7 "The rescission of R 436.1133 will allow  
8 businesses and communities to determine the  
9 best placement of quota specially  
10 designated distributor licenses to maximize  
11 package liquor service to the surrounding  
12 geographical area."

13 Now I believe, even on a local level, this change  
14 will be frowned upon. Communities do not want to see the  
15 maximization of package liquor sales into their area.  
16 Currently, with the half-mile rule in place, it would take an  
17 individual, to walk a half mile, roughly six minutes if  
18 walking five miles per hour. This is also the time it would  
19 take to walk from one competitor to the next. I am stating  
20 this fact to put into perspective of how close we already  
21 are. More requests will pour in to transfer SDD licenses  
22 into concentrated areas and if this rule is rescinded, we may  
23 see, for the first time, four liquor stores at every corner  
24 of an intersection.

25 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Sir, you are past two minutes;

1 if you could wrap up.

2 MR. VIKRAMJIT SINGH: I have firsthand experience  
3 in the past that local communities tend to be one sided.  
4 They do not favor liquor stores and they can easily be  
5 manipulated. On a more local level, politics plays a factor  
6 or can even bring about licensees to bribe their way into an  
7 area. They will favor them more. I will wrap myself up  
8 there. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Thank you. Next, Tarandeep  
10 Bhagtana? Tarandeep Bhagtana from Battle Creek?

11 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Pass.

12 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Pass? Next is Gurcharan Singh.  
13 Gurcharan Singh? From Mt. Pleasant?

14 MR. GURCHARAN SINGH: Good afternoon. My name is  
15 Gurcharan Singh from Mt. Pleasant. My dad opened business  
16 around 15 years ago; paid for my schooling and then I had an  
17 option to a job or do the business. I chose the business,  
18 but now I am double-minded. I am thinking about moving out  
19 of the state and -- because if this happens, it is going to  
20 help my family in the future and things like that and also  
21 investments, like, I am asking my family from other states to  
22 come in Michigan and do this business but not now because  
23 this will not help them at all and put their lives in, like,  
24 not danger, but like their future, at least, financially. So  
25 recently I just -- we just asked them to buy a business

1 elsewhere, which was Kentucky which has been good for them so  
2 far.

3 I also want to say that we work hard for our money.  
4 We don't take any benefits from the state -- most of us  
5 probably don't take any benefits from the state -- which will  
6 happen if you guys hurt us financially. We will have to take  
7 EBT and other benefits. I also employ around six or seven  
8 individuals. I pay for their insurance, health insurance and  
9 taxes and all that stuff. So if this happens, it is going to  
10 hurt us and the only option that we have is either close our  
11 doors and move out of the state and invest our money  
12 somewhere else. Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Thank you. Next, Jason  
14 Canvasser.

15 MR. CANVASSER: Good afternoon, Commissioners. My  
16 name is Jason Canvasser and today I am speaking on behalf of  
17 both the Kroger Company of Michigan and Woodward Detroit CVS  
18 Company. Both Kroger and CVS favor rescission of the  
19 half-mile rule, Rule 436.1133. You have -- should have  
20 correspondence from both -- from Kroger and CVS from myself  
21 in support of the rescission, but I just wanted to say a few  
22 things in addition to what is contained therein. This rule  
23 is antiquated. It is anti-competitive. It is anti-business  
24 and it is extremely burdensome. CVS and Kroger have both  
25 been precluded on numerous occasions from adding spirits to

1           their existing location because of the half-mile rule and  
2           because no exemption exists to allow them to be able to make  
3           those sales. And often times, it is an advantage for their  
4           competitor. Neither CVS, nor Kroger believe that rescission  
5           will result in an overabundance of liquor sales. Liquor SDD  
6           licenses are quota restricted and in fact, being an attorney  
7           that sells and buys liquor licenses on a routine basis for  
8           clients, the prices are astronomical in many locations right  
9           now and the supply is very limited and I think the rescission  
10          will only increase the secondary market for licenses. It  
11          will only increase that demand. And it will create a more  
12          competitive and pro-business atmosphere here in Michigan.  
13          And so therefore, on behalf of Kroger and CVS, we applaud  
14          your efforts to rescind this rule and we ask that you do, in  
15          fact, rescind the rule. Thank you.

16                       CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Next is Zachary Collins.

17                       MR. COLLINS: Hello. I am from Joe's Party Store  
18                       in Kentwood. I am not in favor of the rescission of this  
19                       rule. I have read through your regulatory impact statement  
20                       and Page 8, Section 29, you mention saving time and money  
21                       without having to have the Liquor Control Commission go out  
22                       and send people to measure the distance between locations.  
23                       Guys, it is 2017 -- GPS works just as well. Does the State  
24                       still enforce that 1,000 foot rule between billboards? We  
25                       will see. But, let's see. There is not much doubt the

1 strain that the rescission of this rule is going to have on  
2 our small businesses. Independent retailers, we struggle  
3 enough as it is. And across the street from my store, there  
4 is a CVS and a Speedway. Kentwood has about 17 licenses due  
5 to a 2016 consensus versus the population and about 15 are  
6 taken. If two licenses are available in Kentwood, and these  
7 two stores are right across the street from mine -- which now  
8 sell beer, which drove my beer prices down -- are they going  
9 to get licenses? Are they going to be able to sell minimum  
10 state-shelved priced liquor? I mean, can you make it anymore  
11 difficult for us? We do the best we can with what we have  
12 got and it is hard enough the way it is. These big box  
13 stores are trying to choke us out and I understand you can  
14 kind of see it as a -- you can call it discriminatory if you  
15 want, but frankly, like, we are the ones doing what we can.  
16 You have CVS. You have Speedway, Walmart, Meijer. They make  
17 their margins on everything else they sell. So when it comes  
18 to their pennies, selling that beer at cost, they make a  
19 penny per case. Like, look at all the people in the room.  
20 We can't make a penny per case, two pennies per case. We  
21 have families. We have mortgages. We have taxes we gotta  
22 pay, which ultimately, go back to you guys and there is  
23 nothing we can do about it and you know, if I have to drop my  
24 prices, I have to drop my prices, because if I don't,  
25 customers will be, like, oh, I can go right across the street

1 to Speedway and get that 15-pack for \$10. Like, come on,  
2 guys. You got to think. You got to think about the bigger  
3 picture, here, not about padding the pockets. It's not about  
4 the lobbyists. It's about these small businesses that make  
5 America great for what it is, which makes Michigan for what  
6 it is. We do, what? \$6 billion a year in liquor sales? And  
7 you break that up and spread it a little bit more, what's it  
8 going to do to those communities? You're not really making  
9 that much more money off it, but you are hurting us  
10 independent retailers and if it is a store opening within a  
11 half-mile, well, there is not much we, who have already been  
12 here for years, can do about it. There's a strip mall right  
13 behind my store. If another liquor store pops up in there,  
14 there goes more of my business. I mean, they are only a  
15 hundred feet away and people would rather go there because it  
16 is that much closer. What are we supposed to do? So on  
17 behalf of my store and everybody here, for the most part,  
18 none of us want to see this passed. We don't need a more  
19 difficult industry to exist in. And we will do everything we  
20 can to fight it. It is not fair that you guys just went  
21 about this and didn't ask anybody's opinion until now. I  
22 mean, the AFPD had to sue you just to get a public hearing?  
23 Come on. I thought this was a democracy. All right. Thank  
24 you.

25 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Next is Paul Makkar.

1                   MR. PAUL MAKKAR: My name is Paul Makkar. I am  
2                   representing Small Business Owners Association, a 400-strong  
3                   member association, mostly coming from India. And also  
4                   representing my own business, Rishi's International Beverage  
5                   of Grand Rapids and I am also representing all of my  
6                   independent store owners. I wanted to speak something else  
7                   but now I'll focus on the Kroger and the other Meijer who  
8                   came up with alternative argument. Come on, guys, you know.  
9                   For you guys, the liquor is a loss leader. You advertise big  
10                  minimum prices and then you make money. This is our  
11                  livelihood. So don't say that, you know, there is not enough  
12                  competition or the revenue is huge, you know. Those are all  
13                  bogus.

14                 Now take you to the half-mile except. It is  
15                 40-year old. Now focus for a second on my first speaker,  
16                 then Mr. Vik Singh, and Joe's Party Store. So consider to  
17                 those people that speak. Forty years ago we have half-mile  
18                 rule or one-mile rule, how many guys were there 40 years ago?  
19                 I will give you example: Suppose there were 1,000 and now  
20                 there are 4,000 or 40,000 cars? How hard it is to drive up  
21                 half-mile rule? So we need to go into the, you know,  
22                 aesthetics of that. What is the reason?

23                 Another important issue I would highlight is when  
24                 these people are coming in, the independent, sole owners,  
25                 they are speaking from their heart. They are representing

1           their family. Suppose how many other stores -- liquor stores  
2           in the whole state? 10,000? 20,000? We are talking about  
3           multiplied by four in each family. So we are talking about  
4           80,000 so I am hoping that members, here, sitting, are having  
5           a human heart, not a corporate heart. Corporate heart is  
6           dead. It has no -- no thinking. It is just about money. We  
7           are living in a neighborhood. We talk to our friends, our  
8           neighbors. We go to parties, their kids. There are so many  
9           things are involved which is behind the curtain you don't see  
10          that. And then there are other issues. Those are  
11          highlighted. Those are very important. Don't just rush it.  
12          You know, otherwise, I don't see any reason. The reasons  
13          presented by the Commission are not strong reasons that you  
14          have to rescind the whole law, you know, for that. So I will  
15          appreciate whatever AFPD, small business owners associations  
16          are doing. We will highly appreciate that you please talk to  
17          us, consider the reasons they have given, not go for the big  
18          boxes or my attorney friend who lived in our region. Compare  
19          those regions -- where the human face is on those regions.  
20          So make it important. Take these issues with you in your  
21          heart and share with your family. Maybe they can guide you  
22          in that. So that is my whole thing and I think the rest of  
23          people will say something about that, but my whole focus is  
24          to give it a human face. Go home; talk to your family and  
25          tell them the stories of every person is coming here; that



1 they are going through this. They are scared. They are  
2 worried about their business. They are worried about their  
3 families. They are thinking about moving out of the state if  
4 you do this. So please, you know, that is only we can beg.  
5 Thank you very much.

6 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Next is Rishi Makkar.

7 MR. RISHI MAKKAR: Thank you. To the Commission,  
8 my name is Rishi Makkar. I am a second generation shopkeeper  
9 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I had the privilege, over the  
10 last 25 years, to work with numerous Commissions. And I  
11 can't speak for everyone, but personally, in every  
12 Commission, I have seen partner. I felt that we are the face  
13 of the Commission because we are in front of the clientele  
14 and the customers every day. We represent the best interest  
15 of the Commission. We want to make sure that we are not  
16 selling to minors. We want to make sure that we are  
17 complying with the rules and regulations laid out for not  
18 only our benefit, but for our community's benefit. So even  
19 in today's Commission, and Commissions past, I see in you a  
20 partner. I feel that we are not able to survive without you  
21 guys. Likewise, you are not able to survive without us.  
22 It's a symbiotic relationship that I value very much.  
23 Previous Commissions, I have felt, have been a little bit  
24 more small business oriented. I think that focus has always  
25 been on making sure that the small businesses have the tools

1 that they need to survive. Certainly, every political  
2 campaign I see, that seems to be the message that is given to  
3 me by the guys that want my vote. Hey, we are here for you  
4 guys. It is just that it seems that now when people are  
5 getting into those positions, the roles change. When you  
6 asked for my vote, you are for small business. When you  
7 receive my vote, all of a sudden, you are for special  
8 interest. So I see a little bit of disconnect in our  
9 partnership that is straining the relationship. Recent  
10 administrations and Commissions, unlike previous, have also  
11 favored distributors. Quietly, you will advertise on your  
12 website steady increases given to the distributors because  
13 you realize that they have overheads that are higher than  
14 they were 15, 20 years ago. We are in a three-tier system.  
15 There is three pieces. Right? If you realize that the  
16 middle is being strained -- the distribution -- because they  
17 are paying higher taxes; they are paying higher unemployment;  
18 they are paying higher insurance and you say to them, hey,  
19 you guys deserve more because they have more lobbying power.  
20 They have more money. And I respect that. I don't have  
21 that. But what I do have is thousands of store owners that  
22 are your eyes and ears in the community, every day, day in  
23 and day out. We have the same overheads that those  
24 distributors have. Our payrolls are higher than they were 10  
25 years ago. Right? Our insurance is higher than it was 10

1 years ago. Our rent is higher. Everything is higher for us,  
2 just like it is for the distributors. So please note that if  
3 the distributors deserve more compensation, as you have given  
4 numerous times in your tenure, that so do the retailers. As  
5 a community -- and I can't speak for all the stores, but as a  
6 store, we invest back into our community. When you go --  
7 when a customer comes and says, hey, my son's leg was  
8 amputated; I am having a fundraiser; that is the human side.  
9 We are there for them. You know, we give from what the  
10 community has given us, back to the community. Most of us,  
11 here, are all family men and women, right? So we see that  
12 side of our community. We are there to help them. The bogus  
13 party stores, I think, will number less than a few percentage  
14 points. Ninety-nine percent of us are there to serve the  
15 community and make an honest living.

16 As far as fair competition, it is funny; fair  
17 competition in a controlled environment. Right? So you are  
18 saying, there is no competition in tier one. There is no  
19 competition in tier two, but all of a sudden, the retailer is  
20 a criminal because we have to compete. If it's fair  
21 competition, then let's abolish the MLCC. And let me take my  
22 chances on my own. But I wouldn't like to see that happen.  
23 I think you guys are a good partner. You should continue to  
24 be a good partner. Just like we've done our due diligence, I  
25 think the Commission owes us the same due diligence.

1                   Lastly, the government is for the people and not  
2                   for special interests. I challenge you to find a majority in  
3                   any community that favors this rule. So if this is about  
4                   special interests, let's please take that out. Please ask  
5                   not only of the business owners, please go into those  
6                   communities. I welcome you into my store and you can ask the  
7                   members of the community that I serve day in and day out if  
8                   they favor this rule or not and I can promise you that 90  
9                   percent of them do not favor changing this rule. So we are  
10                  here for the people, as I am as a business, as Kroger is, as  
11                  anyone else is, we are here for our communities. So in my  
12                  humble opinion, none of the communities favor this rule. So  
13                  why is it being passed and slipped underneath? That is all I  
14                  have to say. Thank you for your time.

15                  CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Thank you. Next is Jake Mio.  
16                  Jake Mio? Jake Mio from Park Place Liquor? Jake Mio? One  
17                  last call. All right. Not hearing anything, next is Brian  
18                  Yaldoo. Brian Yaldoo from Bloomfield Hills, Michigan?

19                  UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: He just left. He was here.

20                  CHAIRMAN DELONEY: I heard someone in the audience  
21                  say he just left. He was here. Again, at the end of the  
22                  hearing, we will call to see if any of the folks are back and  
23                  wish to make a comment.

24                  UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: I can speak for him.

25                  CHAIRMAN DELONEY: He indicated a desire to speak.

1 Next is Dhiya Dabish. Dhiya Dabish from Lathrop Village?  
2 Dhiya Dabish from Lathrop Village. Okay. Not hearing that  
3 person, next is Bashar Arabo. Bashar Arabo? Is that you,  
4 sir, in the back? Bashar Arabo? Bashar Arabo? Not hearing  
5 that person. Next, Lisa Berry?

6 MS. BERRY: Hello. From what I am hearing, most of  
7 the people are from Grand Rapids. They are from the Detroit  
8 area. They are from the bigger areas. I represent the  
9 smaller area. Back in July -- I own a party store in a very,  
10 very small town called North Adams. In the village, from the  
11 2016 population, we only have about 477 people, that is men,  
12 women and children. The township, which is Adams, there is  
13 less than 2,500 people. In July, I had received a phone call  
14 from another business owner asking me how the gas station  
15 that had just reopened this spring, how are they getting  
16 their liquor license? He was there that morning. It was the  
17 Friday before the Fourth and he said how are they getting a  
18 liquor license? We can throw a stone far enough to land in  
19 their parking lot. And I started calling. I called the  
20 Commission. My husband had called AFPD. By Monday, the  
21 Liquor Commission had sent someone out. They did the  
22 measuring and they are less than 800 feet away from me. So  
23 my question is: They have the gas that pulls their people  
24 in, but if they need liquor, they come to me. I am doing  
25 everything possible as far as running drawings and keeping my

1 prices down. I can't compete with Walmart, but I can  
2 compete. We have had a day off, maybe one, in the last  
3 year-and-a-half. Because I do work on smaller margins.

4 I have another location on the south side of  
5 Jackson and it is the same situation. You know, we are out  
6 in a very small community. There is gas stations -- and  
7 nothing against gas stations. I need my gasoline, but there  
8 is gas stations that if -- I am, maybe, a half-mile from 127.  
9 There is a Shell station right there and if these people pull  
10 off the highway, I am going to lose any of that business  
11 also. And it is already with minimum wage going up, it is  
12 going up again. I am going to have to cut back on my  
13 employees' hours. When I bought the North Adams store -- I  
14 own another store on the north side. I am selling it on a  
15 land contract because I didn't have a liquor license to pull  
16 people to that store. So that store, I went ahead and gave  
17 up in favor of my liquor stores. And I just have, you know,  
18 if this passes, how am I supposed to split such a small  
19 amount with another company? Because at that point, the BP  
20 is probably going to get their license because they have left  
21 their shelves empty. Apparently, they know more than what I  
22 do. They are very confident they are going to have that  
23 liquor license. So my question is: How am I supposed to  
24 keep competing? And it is going to be with nothing. Twenty  
25 years ago when I bought my first store -- I am in the

1 minority being a woman owning businesses -- especially liquor  
2 stores. And if I would have known that this was the path it  
3 was going to take, I would have possibly bought and went into  
4 another type business. I just -- I don't see how this is  
5 going to do me any good. How I'm going -- I paid more for  
6 the stores I have because they had a liquor license; because  
7 I am it. So now, I am having to re-think what am I going to  
8 have to do to be able to make up that margin? I do keep my  
9 prices at state minimum. I have to compete against the  
10 Walmarts and the Meijer and the bigger stores because like  
11 they said, the beer, I can't compete at pennies over the  
12 dollar on a case of beer. So I don't know what we are going  
13 to end up doing if this does pass because suddenly the  
14 investment that when I get ready to retire in the next eight  
15 to 10 years, everybody is going to have the same thing that I  
16 have and where am I going to be? So other than that, I guess  
17 that is all I have to say. Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Thank you. Next is Steve  
19 Sheena.

20 MR. SHEENA: Good afternoon. Steve Sheena from  
21 Home Town Beverage, Dearborn. Thank you for meeting today.  
22 My question is to you: We had a liquor license and in the  
23 same token, you gave another license -- resort license --  
24 right there directly across the street from the  
25 establishment. That license was in escrow because of

1 construction. I don't know how that slipped in within the  
2 half-mile ruling. What I hear contradicts two laws --  
3 half-mile ruling and resort license. What is a resort  
4 license? Can you please specify what is a resort? What is  
5 the definition of resort? Inner city or outer city? Okay.  
6 That is one thing, which is law 436.153 contradicting law  
7 436.1133 on the Code law -- on the Code law rule books. We  
8 seen the American dream slipping away over here slowly, but  
9 surely. Don't take that away from us; don't take it from  
10 everybody out here.

11 Two, to do some interest of others; Kroger,  
12 Meijers, CVS, they don't keep an eye on their liquor store  
13 like these people do. We monitor it. It is open in the  
14 public. Can you stop kids from taking away from it? Okay?  
15 They are going to get bottle and empty it out and kids go out  
16 there and have a party and kill somebody. It is unmonitored,  
17 unregulated. One thing, go ahead; give it to them. But when  
18 accidents happen, it is too late. We have it behind the  
19 counter. We keep a close eye on it. We keep good records.  
20 We are your partners from the beginning to the ends. Please,  
21 don't kick us to the curb and feed us to the wolves. Let us  
22 fight for what we have. Don't take it away from us. This is  
23 our livelihood. We think highly of you people. Think about  
24 you living in a decent house and living here. Another house  
25 come up across from you or next to you. Is your house value



1 going to be the same as it was by itself? You are  
2 deregulizing (sic.), demoralizing all the business interest  
3 and the value where they put their heart and effort into it.  
4 They got kids going to school. I am one of them. I got kids  
5 in college. I strive to make an honest living. And let's  
6 put it this way: If you want to sit down and talk about  
7 positive things, let's sit down and talk about positive  
8 things. How can we improve our business? How can we improve  
9 our bottom line? There is a lot of way to make good money.  
10 We are your partner. We made the State over -- what is it?  
11 Over \$900 million in profit through the State; maybe it will  
12 reach \$1 billion right now. We did that with all our hard  
13 working for you. No Meijers, no Kroger, no CVS work hard as  
14 we are for you. Okay. We are dedicated to you. We are  
15 committed to you. My question is: Let's improve our bottom  
16 line. The bottom line is the cost of living is becoming the  
17 opposite way now. Actually, we are 15 percent in deficit --  
18 not 15 percent we are making right now. According to the  
19 years, cost of living goes every year -- 1.7, 1.8, 1.0, 1.5.  
20 If we add that in, by then it's about 35 percent. We are not  
21 asking for the world. We are asking the committee to be fair  
22 and square to everybody. Increase the fee of licensee a  
23 little bit to compensate for what you are asking for -- the  
24 half-mile ruling. Increase the bottom line to 25, 27  
25 percent. Let's compromise somewhere. Let's make -- by doing

1 that, we are generating more taxes to the state. We are not  
2 taking away from you. We are adding more to you. So please,  
3 think about it seriously, not just take. I mean, let's put  
4 it this way: The founding father for this law, if they are  
5 alive now, they will turn in their grave. Let's respect  
6 their laws in the past. If it is not broken, don't fix it.  
7 I urge you to look into it deeply and seriously. If we could  
8 do -- ask us for opinions. We could give a lot of opinions.  
9 Let's improve the services, for instance, from the  
10 warehousing.

11 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Sir, you are at two minutes.  
12 Please wrap up your comments.

13 MR. SHEENA: Now we are going to add more  
14 licensees, how we going to get more service? We can't even  
15 add one item. We need to help the customers. We need an  
16 extra item. We cannot add one more item. You have to have  
17 five, six cases. Any more burden on individuals? Thank you  
18 very much. God bless you.

19 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Thank you. Next card -- I can't  
20 make out the name, but they indicate they are the owner of  
21 Plainfield Liquor in Grand Rapids. I apologize.

22 COURT REPORTER: Could I get your name, sir? Could  
23 you spell it for me, please, real quick?

24 MR. SANDHU: Kanwal Sandhu.

25 COURT REPORTER: "G"?

1                   MR. SANDHU: Kanwal Sandhu. "K". Good afternoon,  
2                   sir. The reason for my investment is all this law and with  
3                   this kind of legislation, you are discouraging those being  
4                   here. And as you know, my store was, when I bought that  
5                   store, it was near the bankruptcy. So we build it. We  
6                   create a job here. We put investment here without any kind  
7                   of help of government and this kind of legislation where you  
8                   going to make it, it will destroy everything -- destroying  
9                   the family; that is all I wanted to say, sir. Thank you.

10                   CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Thank you. Next is Nancy  
11                   Mahlow?

12                   MS. MAHLOW: I am sorry. Thank you. I kind of  
13                   feel like a fish out of water because I don't own a store,  
14                   but I am here on behalf of -- I live here in Lansing and I am  
15                   here on behalf of the 30 plus neighborhood organizations and  
16                   approximately 200 neighborhood watch groups that we have,  
17                   here, and we are very, very much against this change. We  
18                   have stores in our neighborhoods. We work with our store  
19                   owners; some are good, some are not. But we don't want to  
20                   increase and we don't want to lose what we have. So  
21                   therefore, this would cause them to close. I am not in the  
22                   business part of it. I don't know the business part of it.  
23                   I know what works in our city and this change will not. So I  
24                   am here on behalf of the neighborhood leaders in Lansing.  
25                   Please don't change this. Thank you.

1                   CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Next is Ramzi Farah. Ramzi  
2 Farah, Fenton, Michigan?

3                   MR. FARAH: Yeah, hi. And my name is Ramzi Farah  
4 from Fenton Party Shop in Fenton. I just want to say  
5 something. When I came like 35, 37 years ago to this  
6 country, I was attracted to the liquor store business because  
7 of its stability and the reason why is because of that half  
8 mile. You could invest money, you know, in five, 10 years,  
9 the money -- I mean, the value, is going to be there, you  
10 know. And as the years went by, you know, you know, working  
11 seven days a week, you know, 10 years later, you know, I  
12 bought another liquor store with higher volume, you know, and  
13 so on, you know. And the thing is this: The values of our  
14 stores, you know, are dependent on this half-mile rule  
15 because, you know, you know that nobody is going to open a  
16 store next to you and take half your business, whatever, you  
17 know. If you spend -- invested, let's say, half a million  
18 dollars, you know that the half million is not going to  
19 become 200 or whatever, you know, when somebody else is going  
20 to open next door. So, you know, I feel that this rule, you  
21 know, it is like somebody pulling the carpet, you know, from  
22 underneath our feet, you know. And I mean, look at everybody  
23 here, you know. We all came -- I mean, most of us came from,  
24 you know, different country. We working hard, you know.  
25 And, you know, all the money that we made is hard earned

1 money and, you know, our children, you know, like my son, he  
2 is in law school -- I mean, in med school. And I am sure,  
3 you know, a lot of the owners, here, you know, they have the  
4 same thing. I mean, we work hard and the next generation,  
5 you know, is going to be like you guys, you know, they are  
6 going to be American. They are going to be well educated,  
7 whatever. Why? Because of that half-mile rule, you know.  
8 That kept us, you know, going, knowing, you know, what we  
9 going to make, you know. The profit, whatever, not like  
10 somebody else is going to open next door and then all of a  
11 sudden, the value of your store is half or less than that.  
12 So, you know, I appreciate you guys, that you don't change  
13 the stability that we have right now in our business. Thank  
14 you.

15 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Thank you. Next, Stephen  
16 Ormond?

17 MR. ORMOND: Good afternoon, Commissioners. Thank  
18 you for this hearing. My name is Steve Ormond with the Clark  
19 Hill Law Firm representing 7-Eleven and also the numerous  
20 individual independent franchisees who operate the 7-Eleven  
21 stores. This is not an easy question for us because we face  
22 the regulatory barrier of the half-mile rule regularly and we  
23 have had to tell our clients that they could not place a  
24 liquor license in given locations many, many times. By the  
25 same token, we have been able to place liquor licenses and so

1           how do we look at this? All right. When I hear about the  
2           competitive impact, I think in a quota-limited environment,  
3           which this is, for spirits, I don't believe there is a net  
4           increase in competition if the half-mile rule is eliminated.  
5           I believe that what happens is the location of the  
6           competition changes but not the extent of it. So for  
7           every -- if we are going to think of winners and losers in  
8           competition, for every winner in competition, there is going  
9           to be a loser in competition in a quota-limited environment.  
10          So we see both sides of this. On balance, we think that the  
11          public is better served if as many unnecessary regulatory  
12          barriers to the creativity and business sense of the  
13          individual business people who do this business, as many of  
14          those barriers that can be eliminated, should be eliminated  
15          because I think the net increase -- we think the net increase  
16          in economic activity, generally, will serve everyone. For  
17          sure, there are individual stories and I am impressed by the  
18          presentations of many of the people here. And I trust the  
19          Commission will hear everything with an open mind. But I  
20          believe in the spirit of regulatory reinvention. It is  
21          appropriate for the Commission to remove the half-mile rule.  
22          Thank you.

23                         CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Thank you. Next is Francis  
24          Sitto. Francis Sitto from Detroit? Franci Sitto from  
25          Detroit? Next is Rita Ross. Rita Ross?

1 MS. ROSS: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is  
2 Rita Ross. I am from the City of Detroit, Michigan. It is  
3 my home and has been my home for 50 years. I represent a  
4 neighborhood that housed 1,400 families. We live in a radius  
5 of 32 blocks. Within that area, there are six liquor stores  
6 and as I speak to you today, last night, we are appealing a  
7 seventh liquor store -- a grocery store -- bad business  
8 decision. His business can't survive selling stale meat and  
9 peppers. So he decided that what would be best for him is to  
10 sell liquor with his beer and wine license, whereas there is  
11 already a store right across the street from him. And he has  
12 been given approval to do that. And we are fighting it. I  
13 don't think I need to tell anybody here this devastating  
14 affect in the City of Detroit, on homes, on children, on  
15 families. I have a family, too. It is not just -- I have  
16 two biological kids and I can't tell you how many foster kids  
17 I have raised in my home who have come from the affects of  
18 alcohol in the community. We now have another item that is  
19 affecting us, which is cannabis. There is an over  
20 concentration of alcohol in our neighborhood and you can see  
21 it through the affect of our children and our families. I do  
22 not support having liquor stores everywhere and my community  
23 does not and we are fighting hard with the Mayor of the City  
24 of Detroit to try to rectify that. We need help to do it.  
25 You know. It will be on all of our backs because we are --

1           you need to make a living and you have a family, we need to  
2           make a living and we have a family, as well. And that  
3           over-concentration of alcohol in our neighborhood, does not  
4           need to be. We actually have too many as it is now. That is  
5           all I have to say.

6                       CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Thank you. Next is Glenda  
7           McGadney.

8                       MS. MCGADNEY: Good afternoon, everybody. My name  
9           is Glenda McGadney from Detroit, Michigan, Russell Woods  
10          Association and I concur with my neighbor, long-time  
11          neighbor, Rita Ross. In my community, we have six liquor  
12          stores and we have a small area that has been around for  
13          decades and it has affected our community greatly. I support  
14          the continuation of the half-mile rule and hopefully, you as  
15          Commissioners, will keep that in place. Thank you so much.

16                      CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Thank you. Next is Jerome  
17          Crete. Jerome Crete?

18                      MR. CRETE: My name is Jerome Crete. I am from  
19          Ideal Party Store in Bay City. I am a third generation  
20          owner. My grandfather started the business in 1934 so we  
21          have been 83 years dealing with changes in the environment  
22          that we operate. My biggest concern with the proposed change  
23          with the half-mile rule is changing the rules in the middle  
24          of the game. I have been personally in the business --  
25          involved in the business myself for 38 years. And during



1           that time, I have been affected on both ends of the half-mile  
2           rule where I was prevented from getting a license because the  
3           half-mile rule wouldn't let me put a store there and also, I  
4           have been -- I have invested very heavily in the businesses  
5           that I have today -- thousands -- hundreds of thousands of  
6           dollars in those businesses today because of the half-mile  
7           rule being in place. My decision to invest those hundreds of  
8           thousands dollars in my business were greatly dependent on  
9           that half-mile rule being in place. So by removing that  
10          half-mile rule in the middle of the game, it puts a business  
11          like myself and other businesses that are, here, too, that  
12          have invested heavily in their businesses, based on that  
13          rule, at a disadvantage. And we are at a disadvantage,  
14          especially to companies -- the larger companies that have the  
15          dollars -- Kroger, Meijers; you know, they already get  
16          advantages within the suppliers and the Commission now. For  
17          them to be able to put stores wherever they want, it is a  
18          competitive disadvantage to us, especially when you are  
19          changing the rules in the middle of the game. It is like --  
20          I kind of liken it to changing the rules for a doctor.  
21          Somebody spends \$300,000 to invest in their education to be a  
22          doctor but we change the rule in the middle of the game, and  
23          say, okay, you know what? Anybody that wants to be a doctor  
24          can get a license. They don't have to invest in the  
25          education. It may be an extreme example, but when you are a

1 small business owner like myself and you have invested so  
2 heavily, based on that rule being in place, it is a tough  
3 pill to swallow to know that that could just be wiped away  
4 overnight. My family has 83 years invested in a small  
5 business where we support local organizations all over our  
6 community. We are a home neighborhood business and always  
7 have been. We have been fighting competition. I understand  
8 competition. I am not afraid of competition. I just want  
9 fair competition. Changing the rule in the middle of the  
10 game is not fair competition. Thank you for your time.

11 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Again, we had several folks who  
12 indicated a desire to speak, but they did not answer when  
13 their name was called. I will try their names one more time  
14 so they can have their opportunity. Harpuran Singh?  
15 Harpuran Singh?

16 MR. HARPURAN SINGH MULTANI: Here. Hello,  
17 everybody. My name is Harpuran Singh Multani and I am in  
18 Portage. I have store there. And I will sum up in one  
19 minute. I have just only three things to say. See what the  
20 people all crying for? One thing. Second thing is that any  
21 one of you ask for the neighborhood peoples, living in those  
22 neighborhoods, do we need some more stores? 99.1 percent  
23 will say hell, no. Third thing is that if you not listening  
24 to any of these peoples, not listening to the public peoples,  
25 then who you guys going to listen? To Meijer? Walmart?

1 Sam's Club? Only those people? Because they have big money?  
2 Do they know when the election is? Be good human being and  
3 listen to the pain of people. They already have too many  
4 problems and I request to you guys if you go home, sit with  
5 yourself, in peace, and see what you are going to do. And I  
6 am sure if you are living in those neighborhoods, you will  
7 move very next day because you have choice. A lot of people  
8 don't have choice, you know. They cannot move. So please,  
9 be humble; be nice and that is what the God like it. Feel  
10 the pain of the other people. I can feel my pain, but if I  
11 feel the pain of the other people, that is what God like it.  
12 Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Thank you. Karamjit Singh?  
14 Karamjit Singh? Karamjit Singh from Rockford?

15 UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: He already spoken.

16 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Not answering. Next, Jake Mio.  
17 Jake Mio? Brian Yaldoo? I am not hearing Brian Yaldoo.  
18 Bashar Arabo? Dhiya Dabish? Franci Sitto? Okay. Those are  
19 all the cards we had from people indicating a desire to  
20 speak.

21 MR. MITCHELL: Sir, I had a card in.

22 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: What is your name, sir?

23 MR. MITCHELL: Mike Mitchell.

24 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Yes. I apologize. Thank you,  
25 sir. Please come forward.

1                   MR. MITCHELL: My name is Mike Mitchell. I am the  
2 Vice-President of Markham Enterprises. We own gas stations  
3 and liquor stores in the state. Many of the people here I  
4 know and I think it is important we talk about competition --  
5 the folks from Krogers and CVS. 7-Eleven just bought 2,200  
6 stores from Sunoco for \$3.3 billion and make it seem like  
7 these people are against free, open market and competition.  
8 Why don't you look around the room, here? These people work  
9 70, 80 hours a week. They overcome social barriers. They've  
10 overcome language barriers. And when I walk into Jessie's  
11 store or Harry's store or Sam's Store or Jay's store, they  
12 know who I am. They talk to me. They are living off the  
13 overflow from the big companies now. So it is not that they  
14 are afraid of competition. They will compete with each other  
15 all day long. But when Krogers can sell gas 10 cents cheaper  
16 than my guys can buy it, that is not really fair. So we'll  
17 talk about competition. On an even playing field, these  
18 folks will compete all day long. They've done it. If you  
19 walk into these small towns especially, you see they are  
20 ingrained in their community. People there know them. They  
21 respect them. I think it is important to understand that the  
22 investments made there, if these folks can't make a living,  
23 the only last piece of value they have is their license,  
24 right? And then it's easy to have somebody come in and say,  
25 oh, I'm going to bail you out and give you high dollar for

1           your license and we lose that. When I go to Kroger or CVS --  
2           I shop there. Most of the time, I have a great experience.  
3           They don't know who I am. They don't have what I have  
4           sitting for me on the counter when I walk in the door. These  
5           people make their living off of hard work, dedication to  
6           their community. I think it's really unfair to paint a brush  
7           that they're afraid of competition. It's who they want to  
8           compete against. They don't have loss leaders. They don't  
9           have the extra things that they can do to bring people in the  
10          door. What they do have is strong work ethic, strong  
11          attitudes, strong ties to community and everyday, these folks  
12          -- anybody here work less than 70 hours in the last six  
13          months? Raise their hand. They're here. This is what they  
14          do. It is not -- they are not afraid of competition. I put  
15          10 of these guys competing against each. It is who they are  
16          competing against and the resources that they are allowed.  
17          We need to protect the small business. We need to protect  
18          the independent people, not because they are afraid of  
19          competition but we need to protect them because eventually  
20          all that is left is big box stores. They are living off what  
21          you guys forget. Leave them alone for it. Thank you.

22                         MR. PAUL DeBARTOLO: Commissioner, I wasn't sure  
23          where to turn my paper in.

24                         CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Please come forward. Did you  
25          fill out a card?

1 MR. PAUL DeBARTOLO: Not really. I did but I  
2 didn't turn it in.

3 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Please make sure to identify  
4 yourself before you speak. While he's filling out his card,  
5 just a reminder that following the conclusion of the hearing,  
6 those who wish to submit written comments have until -- those  
7 comments must be received by the Commission by 5:00 p.m.,  
8 Wednesday, September 13, 2017, so a week from today. Again,  
9 those comments must be received by the Commission by  
10 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, September 13, 2017.

11 Please proceed, sir.

12 MR. DeBARTOLO: Thank you, Mr. Commissioner. My  
13 name is Paul DeBartolo. I'm from Grand Rapids, Michigan. I  
14 am a real estate broker involved with the liquor store  
15 business and represent most of the Punjabis at one time or  
16 another inside of this room. And I think that one thing I  
17 just -- a partner of mine just built a liquor store in Grand  
18 Rapids. And one thing that the public sector does not  
19 understand is what the private sector goes through in order  
20 to build a business. They don't go through the turmoil and  
21 the time, and the money and the effort and everything else  
22 that we go through to fight through the Zoning Commission; to  
23 fight through the Planning Commission; to fight through  
24 everything else just to be able to hang a sign on a building  
25 and open our doors and fill them with inventory and hope and

1 pray that we do enough business to pay our debt service and  
2 may have a little bit of money left over. I also think that  
3 the public sector does not understand what all of these  
4 people in this room -- what all of these faces, all different  
5 colored faces that come from every part of the world, what  
6 they go through to operate a business and the hours that they  
7 work. I was in a store awhile back and talked to a husband  
8 and wife. They both worked. They have no employees. They  
9 can't afford employees and they both work well over 100 hours  
10 a week, each of them. And they have little children -- sent  
11 their children back to India for the summer and people  
12 wouldn't understand it and I admit it, I don't understand  
13 that because I couldn't do that, but these people do. They  
14 sacrifice everything for their children. They sacrifice  
15 everything so their children can live better and not work as  
16 hard as they do and have to do the things that they did to  
17 accomplish what they have accomplished in life. Out of  
18 everybody that has been here today, there have been several  
19 opponents of this law, which personally, I believe should  
20 stay in effect. You should not change. There have been  
21 three opponents to this law and my guess is that all three of  
22 those people that were opponents of this law, were likely  
23 paid to be here. Whereas, everybody else took time; took  
24 their own gasoline; took their own energy; took time away  
25 from their store and it cost everybody else to be here and

1 drive to Lansing and make it in this room today. If I were  
2 sitting in a Planning Commission or a Zoning Commission,  
3 which I have been in several being in the real estate  
4 business for 40 years; I have been in front of the Planning  
5 Commission and the Zoning Commission many times and if there  
6 were this many opponents to a project that somebody was  
7 proposing, that project would be squashed. There wouldn't  
8 even be any question and I understand the woman from Detroit  
9 that is from the neighborhood organization. Those  
10 neighborhood organizations have tremendous power over what  
11 happens in neighborhoods and that is because, I believe, that  
12 these Commissioners -- and whether they are Planning  
13 Commissioners or whether they are Zoning Commissioners, they  
14 realize that they are public servants; that they work for the  
15 public, whether it's the City of Grand Rapids, City of  
16 Detroit or the city of wherever, but they realize they are  
17 public servants because that is what they were hired to do  
18 and you know, I would respectfully submit, unpopularly maybe  
19 to some, that if the Commission cannot understand that they  
20 are public servants, representing the public, then the  
21 Michigan Liquor Control should probably find new public  
22 servants and that is all I have to say.

23 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Those are all the cards we have  
24 from folks indicating a desire to speak today.

25 MR. CLIFTON DENHA: Sir, my son filled out my card



1 and he mistakenly --

2 MR. LOUIS DENHA: Sir, I can attest to the fact  
3 that my dad shares the illness of shyness and I filled out  
4 his sheet.

5 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: What is your name, sir?

6 MR. LOUIS DENHA: I am Louis Denha.

7 MR. CLIFTON DENHA: And I am his father and I  
8 wanted to speak, but my son put on there, didn't want to  
9 speak because he thought I was too shy to speak.

10 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Come forward. Again, state your  
11 name, for the record, so that we have a record of those who  
12 are speaking today.

13 MR. CLIFTON DENHA: My name is Cliff Denha. I own  
14 the Wine Palace in Livonia. My family has been in the liquor  
15 business for 60 years if my father was alive. And I think  
16 the human aspect is what is missing here. I can tell you  
17 from personal experience, I employ 15 people and I can tell  
18 you we have 15 different liquor licenses within three miles  
19 of me and I mean, you could just -- it is unbelievable, but  
20 here is my point: Every day I have somebody come and ask me  
21 for a donation -- every day. And I try to do the best I can.  
22 They go to these big box stores. I am sorry. I am not  
23 authorized to do that, but they come to us. So this is  
24 what's going to hurt: If the big box places take over, you  
25 are going to lose the human aspect of taking care of people

1           who God forbid, have cancer or God forbid, they need to raise  
2           money for some kind of surgery or something like that, which  
3           happens to us on a daily basis. So I think that the  
4           Commission should take -- I mean, out of my 15 people, four  
5           people are family members. Eleven people are regular people  
6           from the neighborhood that I have been employing all my life.  
7           And these people -- this is their starter jobs. This is what  
8           we do. We take care of them. We groom them. So I think the  
9           Commission should -- there is no need to rescind this rule.  
10          There is plenty of competition. Just look at Ohio. Ohio has  
11          450 licenses and they, basically, do the same amount of  
12          business as we do in Michigan with 4,500 licenses. So I  
13          think that is just what I wanted to say. Thank you.

14                   CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Thank you. Those are the people  
15          that have indicated a desire to speak. Again, I'll say it  
16          again, anyone who wishes to submit written comments, they  
17          must be received by the Commission by 5:00 p.m., Wednesday,  
18          September 13, 2017. Again, that is a week from today. We  
19          have received several cards from folks who are present, here,  
20          today, not indicating a desire to speak. Also, we have  
21          already received several written comments that are part of  
22          the public record. They are part of the record for this  
23          hearing. And again, people have until Wednesday,  
24          September 13, 5:00 p.m. to have their comments received by  
25          the Commission. So that is the business we had before us

1 today. At this point, I would entertain a motion to adjourn.

2 MR. MITCHELL: Sir, may I ask one more question?  
3 Is any of that information being relayed to the people that  
4 couldn't get it upstairs? It is my understanding that the  
5 Fire Marshall shut us down; a lot of people upstairs. If  
6 they checked in up there, is there any way to let them know  
7 they have a short time for this?

8 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: This is being publicly recorded  
9 by our court reporter. So everything that happened,  
10 everything that was said on the record today is public  
11 record. So again, I will entertain a motion to adjourn. Is  
12 there support?

13 COMMISSIONER QUIMBY: So moved.

14 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Moved by Commissioner Quimby.  
15 Is there a second?

16 COMMISSIONER OLSHOVE: Second.

17 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Seconded by Commissioner  
18 Olshove. Any further discussion? Hearing none, all in favor  
19 will indicate by saying aye.

20 COMMISSIONER QUIMBY: Aye.

21 COMMISSIONER OLSHOVE: Aye.

22 CHAIRMAN DELONEY: Aye. The ayes have it. We are  
23 adjourned; that being 2:44 p.m.

24 (Hearing concluded at about 2:44 p.m.)

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\* \* \*

I HEREBY CERTIFY that I reported stenographically, the foregoing testimony and proceedings on the date and place hereinbefore set forth; that the same was later reduced to typewritten form, and that the foregoing is a true, full and correct transcript of my stenographic notes so taken.

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Lori K. DeClercq, CSR-3053  
Dated: September 28, 2017