



1212 New York Ave. N.W.  
Suite 900  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
202-525-5717

*Free Markets. Real Solutions.*  
[www.rstreet.org](http://www.rstreet.org)

Testimony from:  
Alan Smith, Midwest Director, R Street Institute

In SUPPORT of HB 669, “To amend sections 4301.10, 4301.62, and 4303.041 and to enact sections 4303.185 and 4303.186 of the Revised Code to enact provisions of law relative to the sale and delivery of alcoholic beverages by liquor permit holders and to declare an emergency.

Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee  
Tuesday, September 1, 2020  
South Hearing Room

Chairman Hoagland, Vice-Chair Schaffer, Ranking Minority Member O’Brien and members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee:

My name is Alan Smith, and I am the Midwest director of the R Street Institute, a public policy organization dedicated to principles of limited government, commercial freedom and free-market solutions.

Ohio has been at the forefront of the national liquor control culture at least since 1909, when the Anti-Saloon League moved its national headquarters from Washington, D.C. to Westerville, Ohio, which had been “dry” since 1859 and had a large printing facility. It became the smallest city in the nation to boast a first-class post office thanks to the nearly 40 tons of mail sent out monthly by the publishing arm of the League.

Over one hundred years later, government control of liquor is still a continuing discussion and we applaud this effort to reform Ohio’s alcohol laws to reflect a more modern marketplace. Modestly loosening the tight grip of the state on alcohol in the current situation, which inhibits customer participation owing to narrowed capacity rules generated by the public health emergency, is a good step.

Specifically, expansion of permitted premises and allowing licensees to dispense alcoholic beverages in sealed individual containers to off-site consumers not only provides a long-overdue update to the state’s alcohol laws, but also will allow Ohio to keep pace with the wave of other states around the country that are currently pursuing similar legislation to allow more to-go and delivery alcohol. As we have seen in the many states that already permit home alcohol delivery, this can be done safely and responsibly.

Under this expanded authority those who make deliveries must follow the same rules and regulations that prohibit the sale of alcohol to minors.

To provide more income for many of the 40,000-plus permit holders allowing adult beverages to be packaged along with take-out meals or simply delivered to homes like many other expansion services is critically important to maintain as much employment as possible in the restaurant and delivery sectors. We heartily support this step forward.

Congratulations, as well, on other regulatory reforms currently considered by the committee. Count on us to be helpful with additional government deregulation to mitigate lingering restrictions that modern consumer products and practices may render nonaligned to actual health and safety issues.

I am happy to answer any of your questions.

Alan Smith  
Midwest Director  
R Street Institute  
[asmith@rstreet.org](mailto:asmith@rstreet.org)  
(614) 893-9999