

Molly Wingrove

From: Jerry Griffin <jgriffin@MIRAMW.ORG>
Sent: Monday, March 11, 2024 1:23 PM
To: Rep. Tyrone Carter (District 1); Rep. Tullio Liberati (District 2); Rep. Mike Mueller (District 72); Rep. Cynthia Neeley (District 70); Rep. Jerry Neyer (District 92); Rep. Helena Scott (District 7); Rep. Stephanie Young (District 16); Rep. Kristian C. Grant (District 82); Rep. Mike McFall (District 8); Rep. Will Snyder (District 87); Rep. Jimmie Wilson Jr. (District 32); Rep. Pauline Wendzel (District 39); Rep. Graham Filler (District 93); Rep. Joseph A. Aragona (District 60); Rep. Matthew Bierlein (District 97)
Cc: Molly Wingrove
Subject: House Bill 5421

Chair Carter and members of the House Regulatory Reform Committee,

On behalf of the Midwest Independent Retailers Association (MIRA), I am writing to express our opposition to House Bill 5421. The bill, as proposed, would require MIRA's members to accept bottle returns during all hours of operation between 8 am and 11 pm. The vast majority of our members are small business owners whose stores do not have reverse vending machines on hand, which requires their employees to hand count and sort filthy, unhygienic returnables while other customers wait. Our members, most of whom do not place restrictions on when returns will be accepted, must manage labor resources, and have a better understanding of when the need exists to have more employees, or less, during certain operating hours. The mandate created in House Bill 5421 is bad for business as it would require MIRA's members to schedule additional employees during periods they have determined the labor needs are less.

We understand the motivation behind this bill in making the process of returning bottles and cans convenient for consumers. We hope there is a desire to make the process convenient for the retailer as well. In making the convenience argument, one must acknowledge that consumers, if faced with an inability to return bottles and cans to one location, will not seek a second location. That is an expression of their disfavor and fatigue with having to return these items to a separate location while the myriad of other items they recycle are picked up or gathered in one single container and do not need to be handled and counted. The greatest convenience we can give the consumer is not require them to return these items at all. We currently operate two parallel recycling programs, one convenient, and one that requires consumers and retailers to handle disgusting containers coated and filled with residue, remnants of tobacco products and the like, all while restocking food or shopping for it. MIRA would recommend the legislature move forward at ensuring there is a well-coordinated recycling system that ensures ALL recyclable material enters in the system. This is best accomplished by making it convenient to the consumer by ensuring an accessible, one-stop system for disposing of these containers and repealing the bottle bill. Considering these issues, MIRA urges your opposition to House Bill 5421 and direct your attention to the broader issues attached to this policy question.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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P.S. Looking for an opportunity to help our younger generation attending college? Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation awards \$1500 academic scholarships to extraordinary students. Open enrollment started January 1, 2024 and is open until April 1st, 2024. <https://miramw.org/foundation/scholarship-application/>