

Rep. Allen: Votes for alcohol regulatory reform

Posted on Thursday, Jun 22, 2023

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

Madison, WI -Today, State Representative Scott Allen (R - Waukesha) voted to pass AB 304 which creates a Division of Alcohol Beverages dedicated exclusively to alcohol beverage education, regulation, and enforcement. Presently, enforcement is under the auspice of the Department of Revenue (DOR) which might suggest the vantage point of the regulators. This bill also clarifies many vague interpretations of laws relating to alcohol.

“Alcohol is regulated for a reason,” stated Rep. Allen. “It’s a matter of public safety.”

Most current laws focused on alcohol are outdated. They don’t apply to the growing need of a modern economy. That’s why this bill includes provisions such as updates to the classification of hard seltzers, creates a uniform closing hour among retail sellers, and allows for a better promotion of the Safe Ride program. The bill also defines and clarifies the meaning of “public places”.

The bill also regulates wedding barns, as public places where alcohol is certainly distributed. Most of the wedding barns functioning today are unregulated. This bill requires the wedding barns to obtain a class B liquor license. The bill also includes a 2-year relief period and a cap increase in which businesses will be able to apply for a liquor license. Additionally, in light of the new change, it will also be easier for bartenders to obtain a bartending license.

Groups that supported this bill: Wisconsin Craft Beverage Coalition, Wisconsin Wine and Spirit Institute, Wisconsin Grocers Association, Anheuser-Busch Companies, Bowling Centers Association of Wisconsin, Kwik Trip, Mark Anthony Brands, Molson Coors Beverage Company, New Glarus Brewing Company, Retail Services and

Systems, Tavern League of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Amusement and Music Operators, Wisconsin Beer Distributors Association, Wisconsin Fuel and Retail Association, Wisconsin Hotel and Lodging Association, Wisconsin Independent Businesses, and Wisconsin Restaurant Association.

“This bill creates a modern regulatory framework that creates clarity for this industry to grow,” said Rep. Allen.