

To members of this committee:

HB1379 will end a terrible inconvenience among Maryland's consumers. A small group of retailers is using the force of law to force us to be their customers. That's not the way people make friends.

The beer and wine retailers have previously maintained that this reform is a war against small business. That is false. Nobody is demanding that we shut down the family-run Chinese restaurants, or the UPS franchises, or the flower stores, or the craft breweries.

Similarly, the owners of Chinese restaurants don't demand that Chinese food be sold only in their stores. The owners of UPS franchises don't demand that we send packages only through their stores. The same flexibility should be forthcoming from the beer and wine retailers.

Should some of the beer and wine stores close as a result of this reform (and some of them no doubt will), those owners already have the business skills to establish other retail ventures. They know how to deal with customers, vendors, landlords, and bureaucrats; that's business knowledge applicable to much more than just beer and wine.

All we are asking is to be free of the demand to be someone else's customer when we don't necessarily want to.

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