

## Testimony in Support of SB0824

Alcoholic Beverages - Prohibition on Class A Licenses for Chain Stores, Supermarkets, and Discount Houses – Repeal

February 19, 2025

**To:** Honorable Chair Pamela Beidle, Vice Chair Antonio Hayes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee

**From:** Kayla Mock, Political & Legislative Director  
United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Local 400

Chair Beidle and members of the Senate Finance Matters Committee, I appreciate the chance to share my testimony on behalf of our over 10,000 members in Maryland, working in grocery, retail, food distribution, cannabis, and healthcare. Through collective bargaining, our members raise the workplace standards of wages, benefits, safety, and retirement for all workers. Union members are critical to addressing inequality and uplifting the middle class.

Our members are the hardworking men and women who keep Maryland's grocery stores running, ensuring families have access to fresh food and essential goods.

**We support SB0824 and urge you to vote this bill favorably.**

This legislation is not just about convenience for consumers — it is about **creating and preserving good jobs, generating much-needed state revenue, and modernizing our outdated laws.**

**Passing this bill will:**

- 1. Generate \$32 Million in New Revenue Without Raising Taxes** – At a time when Maryland is facing significant budget challenges, this legislation provides an opportunity to add **\$32 million in new state revenue** without imposing any new taxes on residents. This is a win-win solution that benefits both workers and taxpayers.
- 2. Strengthen Union Jobs & Economic Growth** – Allowing beer and wine sales in grocery stores will expand employment opportunities, increase work hours, and provide better wages and benefits for thousands of union grocery workers across the state.

3. **Enhance Consumer Convenience** – Maryland is one of the few remaining states that does not allow grocery stores to sell beer and wine. This legislation will give residents the same convenience that consumers in most other states already enjoy. In fact, **polls show that three out of four Maryland consumers support this change**. It's time for our laws to catch up with consumer demand.
4. **Ensure Safe & Responsible Alcohol Sales** – Grocery stores already follow strict ID verification procedures for products like tobacco and lottery tickets. Many major retailers successfully sell alcohol in other states while adhering to strong responsible sales practices. Maryland grocers are prepared to do the same.

Maryland needs revenue, Maryland consumers want convenience, and Maryland businesses deserve the opportunity to grow and thrive. This legislation accomplishes all three. I urge the committee to give it favorable consideration.

**We urge a favorable report on SB0824.**