

THE EXPANDED BEVERAGES LICENSES BALLOT QUESTION

VOTE NO

BALLOT QUESTION FACT CHECKER



ELECTION DAY
NOV. 3rd

CUMBERLAND FARMS & THEIR ALLIES CLAIM:

- The Ballot Question is needed because the cap on liquor licenses, dating to the end of Prohibition, gives package stores a monopoly. **FALSE.** *Every person or corporation can have 9 licenses right now.*
- Cumberland Farms asserts that local authorities have their hands tied by state law, which dictates how many licenses each town — and each company — can have. **MISLEADING.** *Municipalities use caps to prevent saturation and protect communities.*
- Cumberland Farms says they want voters in 2020 to do away with “archaic” state alcohol laws. **FALSE.** *Protecting public safety is not “archaic.”*



Source: “Package stores dig in for fight over ballot question,” By Christian M. Wade Statehouse Reporter (Sept. 16, 2019)

CUMBERLAND FARMS CLAIMS ARE FALSE AND MISLEADING

- *Hidden provisions in the Cumberland Farms ballot question misleads Massachusetts immediately creating a new **unlimited food store license** classification outside the state quota system, creates a statewide free for all by **repealing the ownership cap on all liquor licenses** by 2024, creates an exculpatory ID verification **defense for stores**, removes relied upon excise tax revenues from the State Budget and potentially reduces the number of ABCC inspectors who oversee public health and safety.*

“Convenience store chains, supermarkets, and retail corporations are treated unfairly by package stores who have a monopoly on alcohol licenses.” FALSE AND MISLEADING.

- No business in Massachusetts has a monopoly on liquor licenses because State law mandates that every Section 15 licensee is entitled to 9 alcohol retail licenses beginning in 2020. Food store chains like Cumberland Farms, Target, Wal-Mart, Wholefoods, and others already have up to 7 or more licenses.
- The Ballot Question allows convenience store chains, supermarkets, and national retail corporations to hold unlimited licenses across the state, while impeding package stores until 2024.
- The Ballot Question allows for marketplace control of beer and wine by Cumberland Farms and food stores.
- Passage of the Ballot Question will flood MA cities and towns with retail outlets that can sell alcohol.
- The flood of retail outlets able to sell alcohol throughout MA will be a source of cheap booze. Low cost alcohol encourages illegal sales and over consumption that will be directed at the most vulnerable people in society. Many “Gateway Cities” are already combatting the social effects of easy access to cheap alcohol.

“The Cumberland Farms Ballot Question does away with “archaic” state alcohol laws.” FALSE

- **THE QUOTA SYSTEM IS NOT ARCHAIC.** Letting the marketplace decide how many stores should be in a community will increase profits for international convenience store chains like Cumberland Farms and their national corporate food store allies, but it is reckless and dangerous to public safety. The State Quota System, approved within every Massachusetts city and town that allows for the sale of alcohol, was implemented after the repeal of Prohibition to uphold public safety. Extensive research by National public health experts compellingly confirms that expanding alcohol availability results in increased excessive alcohol consumption that heightens health and social problems within the affected communities.
- **ALLOWING STORES TO RELY ON A SCANABLE ID FOR THE PURCHASE OF ALCOHOL IS DANGEROUS.** Current law is intended to prevent access to alcohol by minors. The Ballot Question tricks unsuspecting voters, who think the question only expands licenses, into adding what will be acceptable ID for the purchasing of alcohol. Knowing that fake IDs are pervasively available, only 6 forms of ID are permitted for the purchase of alcohol in Massachusetts. The 6 forms of acceptable ID are: Valid MA Driver’s License, valid MA Liquor License, valid MA ID card, valid Passport, valid Passport Card, valid U.S. Military ID card from one of the 5 branches of the U.S. military. **THE BALLOT QUESTION HELPS MINORS BUY ALCOHOL.**
- **REMOVING THE ID RESTRICTION INCREASES ACCESS TO ALCOHOL BY MINORS. Massachusetts ID cards are easy to illegally duplicate. It costs about \$130.** A good out of state fake ID can also be purchased on the Internet for about \$80 – \$120. Fake IDs from other states often trick ID scanning devices because the information in the bar codes are likely the stolen identity of another person. ID Scanning Machines do not know the difference between stolen and good information imbedded on an ID card. MA laws address this concern by mandating that retailers of alcohol beverages restrict what can be used to verify a person’s age and identity. **The Ballot Question recklessly removes important public safety provisions.**
- **ALCOHOL BEVERAGES ARE A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE.** The sale of alcohol should not be a consumer leader item. Alcohol sales must be handled with care to prevent over consumption and underage drinking.

“Unlimited alcohol licenses available throughout Massachusetts will increase convenience and consumer choice.” FALSE.

- The Ballot Question will potentially increase the number a retail off premise alcohol licenses from approximately 2800 to 6000, or more (unlimited). It is not difficult now to find beer or wine in Massachusetts. The state currently offers over 2,800 liquor licenses. If some consumers are slightly inconvenienced because they have to make a second stop at the package store after the supermarket, that’s a small price to pay for not making alcohol more easily available to minors and chronically intoxicated people. Police chiefs and city officials across the state opposed a similar Ballot Question in 2006.
- Consumer choice will decline because profit is the name of the game. Convenience stores and national food store chains that sell alcohol use beer and wine to lead unlikely customers to their stores. Consequently, they typically stock only the top selling products at the lowest permitted cost. **Choice will decline.**

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The Massachusetts Package Stores Association

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The Massachusetts Package Stores Association (MPSA) is a non-profit trade organization representing the interests of locally owned retail liquor stores across Massachusetts. MPSA is keenly aware of the business challenges its members face including: rising operational costs; changing competitive landscape; new insurance requirements; wage and labor issues; government regulations; legislative issues; preventing illegal sales and more.