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**Better Beer Laws Campaign Launched Today in Harrisburg  
125,000+ Signatures, Website and Beer Drinkers' Bill of Rights Unveiled**

(HARRISBURG) Members of the Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association (PFMA) and the Pennsylvania Convenience Store Council (PCSC) today joined state Sen. John Rafferty (R-Montgomery) as he unveiled legislation that would make sweeping and historic changes to the state's beer laws.

In addition to announcing its support of the beer bill, PFMA/PCSC revealed its new website, [www.sixpacktogo.org](http://www.sixpacktogo.org) which provides a forum for Pennsylvania's adult beer drinkers who want to join the state's "Beer Revolution."

"I support Senator Rafferty's bill because it treats adults like adults and protects their rights as beer drinkers," said Stan Sheetz, CEO of Sheetz Inc., who presented Rafferty with the signatures of more than 125,000 Pennsylvanians who signed petitions calling for changes to the state's prohibition-era beer laws.

Sheetz, who also unveiled the Pennsylvania Beer Drinkers' Bill of Rights (*att.*), said he was attending today's rally "as a conduit" for his customers.

"Before you even launch your bill, you already have more than 125,000 supporters," Sheetz told Rafferty as he presented the petitions. "These, Senator, are the members of the Beer Brigade who are willing to follow you into battle as you begin the fight for Better Beer Laws."

Rafferty's bill provides more consumer convenience and increases protection against selling to minors. Among other provisions, the bill:

- Helps prevent sales to minors by requiring 100 percent carding for all beer sales or the use of an Electronic Age Verification (EAV) device by beer retailers;
- Allows supermarkets and large convenience stores to purchase an existing license and convert it to a Food Merchant License (F); and,
- Maintains the number of existing licenses.

"Selling beer, including Pennsylvania-produced microbrews, in stores gives consumers greater choices, and the protections in this bill will actually help stop sales to minors," Rafferty said at today's rally.

Rafferty said the Pennsylvania State Police have conducted hundreds of age compliance checks at beer distributors and in 2008 found that beer distributors sell to minors 40 percent of the time. Rafferty believes that his bill will help 'crack down' on underage beer sales.

Joining Rafferty were several PFMA/PCSC members who commented on the landmark legislation, including John Otway, owner of Dutch's Family Markets, located in Greentown, PA. Otway, who has sold beer for more than eight years, said he is concerned with the pending state Supreme Court case whereby the issue of interior connections is being addressed.

"I can't predict how the court will rule, but I do know that my customers have told me that they want to be able to continue buying beer from me – and I certainly want to continue selling it to them," Otway said. "Sen. Rafferty's bill would allow me to continue selling beer regardless of the court's ruling."

Otway also noted that because his store is located in a high-tourist area, he suspects that a fair amount of state tax revenue is being lost because visitors are bringing in beer from out of state. "Sen. Rafferty's bill will lighten their load," Otway quipped.

Greg TenEyck, Director of Public Affairs and Government Relations for Safeway's Eastern Division, which includes Genuardi's, located in SE Pennsylvania also spoke at the rally.

"We currently operate more than 1,700 stores across the U.S. and Canada," TenEyck said. "And we have had a lot of experience selling alcohol in our stores over the years. In fact, we sell beer in 34 states but not in Pennsylvania."

TenEyck said he wants to dispel the proposition, or the myth, that selling beer in supermarkets will put others who sell beer out of business. "I think those who believe that are giving supermarkets far too much credit," he said.

"To the contrary, we have found that supermarkets that sell beer and other forms of alcohol can peacefully co-exist with other business that do the same," TenEyck added. "In many shopping centers, we have independent liquor stores operating next door to a Safeway that sells many of the same products."

Randy St. John, Sr. Vice President of Association Services for PFMA/PCSC said, "Rafferty's bill respects those who sell beer now, recognizes the rights of those who want to sell beer, and answers the call of consumers who deserve more choice and convenience."

The Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association, Pennsylvania Convenience Store Council represents more than 1,100 corporate members in Pennsylvania.

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