



To Whom It May Concern:

The parents and community of Asbury Elementary urge the General Assembly to consider sensible regulations regarding the sale of malt liquor by grocery and convenience stores. We are concerned about the potential safety implications of allowing all existing 3.2 beer licensees, even those in close proximity to schools, to begin selling full-strength malt liquor without adequate community review. Our school is near several of these locations and our students would be affected by this change.

The potential change to the sale of liquor in convenience and grocery stores creates several concerns:

1. Convenience and grocery stores are frequented by underage customers. That is in stark contrast to retail liquor stores, which by custom do not typically permit under-21 customers on their licensed premises. Exacerbating this problem is the fact that many malt liquor products are made to look like sodas and energy and sports drinks, appealing particularly to young people. Some of the alcoholic pops look so much like their non-alcoholic counterparts that a bystander cannot tell the difference.
2. 3.2 beer is a very different product than malt liquor. Some of these items have alcohol content equivalent to 6 shots of liquor. There should be the same needs and desires review so that our community can have input about what is sold in our neighborhood.
3. There are locations in our neighborhood, and likely in neighborhoods across the state, where more alcohol outlets would be inappropriate. They are near schools or near many other liquor stores.

Under the current system, our neighborhood has a voice in this process. We ask that you do not take away that voice. If a convenience or grocery store wants to sell a high alcohol product, especially in a location that our kids shop, they should have to go through the same process as a liquor store. Our neighborhood should maintain its input in this process.

Please take the time to consider the kids who are going to be affected by this change. Whether it is a younger clerk in a store or a kid shopping for a candy bar, this is a major change and should allow for safety regulation and community review.

Sincerely,

The parents, community and PTSO of Asbury Elementary