



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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**SB 763 – Alcoholic Beverages – Class A Licenses – Retail Grocery Establishments
(Healthy Food Accountability Act of 2021)
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
March 5, 2021**

SUPPORT

**Donna S. Edwards
President
Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 763 – Alcoholic Beverages – Class A Licenses – Retail Grocery Establishments (Healthy Food Accountability Act of 2021). My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

The time for retail sales of beer and wine in Maryland's grocery stores has come. For decades we have operated under a byzantine system of twenty-four jurisdictions and their individualized alcohol laws regarding the sale of beer and wine. SB 763 provides some level of continuity, across the state, when it comes to low alcohol content beverages.

Maryland consumers benefit from the convenience of one-stop shopping. Currently, trips to the grocery store can require a second trip to a beer or wine store, as an "add on" trip, for no discernible reason other than our existing law. And it is unclear how Marylanders are being served by requiring this distinction. We are only 1 of 3 States that prohibit beer in chain stores and one 1 of 10 states that prohibit wine sales in chain stores. Every state, and D.C., that surrounds us allows for beer and wine sales in chain grocery stores. Maryland stands as an extreme outlier when it comes to our retail beer and wine sales.

Marylanders should have the the freedom to be able to pick up wine when they are shopping for their groceries. **We ask that you provide that freedom and give a favorable report to SB 763.**