



National Liquor Law Enforcement Association

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NLLEA Statement on Privatization Initiatives in Washington and Virginia

The National Liquor Law Enforcement Association (NLLEA) is following with great interest the most recent efforts to privatize state controlled liquor sales in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the State of Washington. While the NLLEA does not take a position on whether alcoholic beverages should be sold by private or public entities, should these privatization initiatives in Virginia and Washington occur, the NLLEA is concerned that adequate resources will not be maintained for sustained statewide alcohol law enforcement and regulatory actions.

Alcoholic beverage control agencies at the state level are uniquely qualified and situated to impose the comprehensive controls (hours of sale, restrictions on price promotions, advertising constraints, etc.) that are essential to establishing an environment that encourages the orderly and legal use of alcoholic beverages. Further, a robust and fully staffed statewide alcohol enforcement agency ensures that these controls (laws and regulations) are being uniformly enforced. If privatization occurs in either Washington or Virginia, the number of outlets licensed to sell alcohol will most likely increase significantly as demonstrated in other US States and Canadian provinces that eliminated their retail monopolies¹. Research demonstrates that alcohol outlet density is the single greatest predictor of violent crime in neighborhoods.^{2 3} The ability to enforce reasonable limits on the sale and consumption of alcohol is crucial to mitigating the perils associated with increased alcohol consumption including drunk driving, felonious assaults, disorderly behavior, vandalism and the like.

It is imperative that Washington State and the Commonwealth of Virginia continue to adequately fund an alcoholic beverage enforcement agency that has broad powers to regulate and control the product and that is sufficiently staffed to enforce those controls. As NLLEA President Steven Ernst said, "The NLLEA is committed to working with law enforcement agencies to provide the best strategies to prevent underage

¹ Campbell CA, Hahn PA, Elder R, et al, Task Force on Community Preventive Services. The effectiveness of limiting alcohol outlet density as a means of reducing excessive alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harms. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 2009; 37(6): 556-559.

² Speer PW, et al. Violent crime and alcohol availability: Relationships in an urban community. *Journal of Public Health Policy*. 1998; 19(3): 303-318.

³ Roncek DW & Maier PA. Bars, blocks and crimes revisited: Linking the theory of routine activities to the empiricism of "hot spots." *Criminology*. 1991; 29: 725-753.

drinking, impaired driving, and improve overall public safety. However, we can't implement these strategies if alcohol law enforcement agencies don't have adequate staff and resources to effectively do their jobs. We hope that those working on these privatization initiatives in Virginia and Washington will be sure to consider the impact that these changes will have not only on the residents of these states, but also the state and local law enforcement agencies who will most likely have many more alcohol establishments to regulate."

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The National Liquor Law Enforcement Association (NLLEA) is non-profit association of law enforcement personnel dedicated to the enforcement of liquor laws and regulation. It currently has more than 1,000 members representing 39 US States and 4 Canadian Provinces. The NLLEA is committed to improving the standards and practices of liquor law enforcement, to the professional development of its members, and to promoting public safety.