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SENATE BILL NO. 1098

Offered January 12, 2011

Prefiled January 11, 2011

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 4.1-111 and 4.1-119 of the Code of Virginia, relating to alcoholic beverage control; public warning regarding alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

Patron—Hanger

Referred to Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 4.1-111 and 4.1-119 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 4.1-111. Regulations of Board.

A. The Board may promulgate reasonable regulations, not inconsistent with this title or the general laws of the Commonwealth, which it deems necessary to carry out the provisions of this title and to prevent the illegal manufacture, bottling, sale, distribution and transportation of alcoholic beverages. The Board may amend or repeal such regulations. Such regulations shall be promulgated, amended or repealed in accordance with the Administrative Process Act (§ 2.2-4000 et seq.) and shall have the effect of law.

B. The Board shall promulgate regulations that:

1. Prescribe what hours and on what days alcoholic beverages shall not be sold by licensees or consumed on any licensed premises, including a provision that mixed beverages may be sold only at such times as wine and beer may be sold.

2. Require mixed beverage caterer licensees to notify the Board in advance of any event to be served by such licensee.

3. Maintain the reasonable separation of retailer interests from those of the manufacturers, bottlers, brokers, importers and wholesalers in accordance with § 4.1-216 and in consideration of the established trade customs, quantity and value of the articles or services involved; prevent undue competitive domination of any person by any other person engaged in the manufacture, distribution and sale at retail or wholesale of alcoholic beverages in the Commonwealth; and promote reasonable accommodation of arm's length business transactions.

4. Establish requirements for the form, content, and retention of all records and accounts, including the (i) reporting and collection of taxes required by § 4.1-236 and (ii) the sale of alcoholic beverages in kegs, by all licensees.

5. Require retail licensees to file an appeal from any hearing decision rendered by a hearing officer within 30 days of the date the notice of the decision is sent. The notice shall be sent to the licensee at the address on record with the Board by certified mail, return receipt requested, and by regular mail.

6. Prescribe the terms and conditions under which persons who collect or trade designer or vintage spirit bottles may sell such bottles at auction, provided that (i) the auction is conducted in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 6 (§ 54.1-600 et seq.) of Title 54.1 and (ii) the bottles are unopened and the manufacturers' seals, marks, or stamps affixed to the bottles are intact.

7. Prescribe the terms and conditions under which credit or debit cards may be accepted from licensees for purchases at government stores, including provision for the collection, where appropriate, of related fees, penalties, and service charges.

8. Require that banquet licensees in charge of public events as defined by Board regulations report to the Board the income and expenses associated with the public event on a form prescribed by the Board when the banquet licensee engages another person to organize, conduct or operate the event on behalf of the banquet licensee. Such regulations shall be applicable only to public events where alcoholic beverages are being sold.

9. Provide alternative methods for licensees to maintain and store business records that are subject to Board inspection, including methods for Board-approved electronic and off-site storage.

10. Require off-premises retail licensees to place any premixed alcoholic energy drinks containing one-half of one percent or more of alcohol by volume in the same location where wine and beer are available for sale within the licensed premises.

11. Prescribe the terms and conditions under which mixed beverage licensees may infuse, store, and sell flavored distilled spirits.

12. Require off-premises retail licensees to post in a location that is conspicuous to the public at the place where the licensee carries on the business for which the license has been granted a sign that bears a warning regarding the risks of consuming alcoholic beverages during pregnancy.

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C. The Board may promulgate regulations that:

1. Provide for the waiver of the license tax for an applicant for a banquet license, such waiver to be based on (i) the amount of alcoholic beverages to be provided by the applicant, (ii) the not-for-profit status of the applicant, and (iii) the condition that no profits are to be generated from the event. For the purposes of clause (ii), the applicant shall submit with the application, an affidavit certifying its not-for-profit status. The granting of such waiver shall be limited to two events per year for each applicant.

2. Establish limitations on the quantity and value of any gifts of alcoholic beverages made in the course of any business entertainment pursuant to subdivision A 22 of § 4.1-325 or subsection C of § 4.1-325.2.

D. Board regulations shall be uniform in their application, except those relating to hours of sale for licensees.

E. Courts shall take judicial notice of Board regulations.

F. The Board's power to regulate shall be broadly construed.

§ 4.1-119. Operation of government stores.

A. Subject to the requirements of §§ 4.1-121 and 4.1-122, the Board may establish, maintain and operate government stores for the sale of alcoholic beverages, other than beer and wine not produced by farm wineries, vermouth, mixers, and products used in connection with distilled spirits, including any garnish or garnishment applied to the rim of a glass of distilled spirits, as may be approved by the Board from time to time, in such counties, cities, and towns considered advisable by the Board. The Board may discontinue any such store.

B. With respect to the sale of wine produced by farm wineries, the Board may give preference to farm wineries that produce 2,500 cases or less of wine per year.

C. The Board shall fix the wholesale and retail prices at which the various classes, varieties and brands of alcoholic beverages and other Board-approved products that are sold in government stores. Differences in the cost of operating stores, and market competition and conditions may be reflected in the sale price of alcoholic beverages sold at government stores. The Board may sell alcoholic beverages to federal instrumentalities (i) authorized and operating under the laws of the United States and regulations of the United States Department of Defense and (ii) located within the boundaries of federal enclaves or reservations over which the United States has acquired jurisdiction, at prices which may be greater or less than the wholesale price charged other authorized purchasers.

D. Alcoholic beverages at government stores shall be sold by employees of the Board, who shall carry out the provisions of this title and Board regulations governing the operation of government stores and the sale of alcoholic beverages, except that the Board may appoint the holder of a distiller's license or its officers and employees as agents of the Board for the sale of spirits, manufactured by or for, or blended by such licensee on the licensed premises, at government stores established by the Board on the distiller's licensed premises, provided:

1. At least 51 percent of the agricultural products used by such licensee to manufacture the spirits are grown on the licensee's farm or land in Virginia leased by the licensee and no more than 25 percent of the agricultural products are grown or produced outside the Commonwealth. However, upon petition by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Board may permit the use of a lesser percentage of products grown on the licensee's farm if unusually severe weather or disease conditions cause a significant reduction in the availability of agricultural products grown on the farm to manufacture the spirits during a given license year;

2. Such licensee is a duly organized nonprofit association holding title to real property, together with improvements thereon that are significant in American history, under a charter from the Commonwealth to preserve such property, and which association accepts no federal, state, or local funds; or

3. Such licensee operates a museum whose licensed premises is located on the grounds of a local historic building or site.

Such agents shall sell the spirits in accordance with the provisions of this title, Board regulations, and the terms of the agency agreement between the Board and the licensed distiller.

For the purposes of this subsection, "blended" means the receipt by a licensed distiller of deliveries and shipments of alcoholic beverages, other than wine and beer, in accordance with subdivision 6 § 4.1-201 to be (i) additionally aged by the receiving distillery in order to increase the quality and flavor of such alcoholic beverages and (ii) bottled by the receiving distillery.

E. No Class 1 neutral grain spirit or alcohol, as defined by federal regulations, that is without distinctive character, aroma, taste or color shall be sold in government stores at a proof greater than 101 except upon permits issued by the Board for industrial, commercial, culinary, or medical use.

F. All alcoholic beverages sold in government stores shall be in closed containers, sealed and affixed with labels prescribed by the Board.

G. No alcoholic beverages shall be consumed in a government store by any person unless it is part of an organized tasting event conducted by (i) an employee of a manufacturer of distilled spirits or farm

winery or (ii) an authorized representative of a manufacturer of distilled spirits or farm winery with a permit issued by the Board pursuant to subdivision A 15 of § 4.1-212, and the samples of alcoholic beverages provided to any consumer do not exceed the limits for spirits or wine set forth in subdivision A 5 of § 4.1-201.1. No sample may be consumed by any individual to whom alcoholic beverages may not lawfully be sold pursuant to § 4.1-304. The Board shall establish guidelines governing tasting events conducted pursuant to this subsection.

H. With respect to purchases by licensees at government stores, the Board shall (i) accept in payment for any purchase or series of purchases cash, electronic fund transfer, credit or debit card, or check payable to the Board, in the exact amount of any such purchase or series of purchases and (ii) provide notice to licensees on Board policies relating to the assignment of government stores from which licensees may purchase products and any procedure for the licensee to elect to make purchases from an alternative government store.

I. With respect to purchases by consumers at government stores, the Board shall accept cash in payment for any purchase or series of purchases. The Board may adopt regulations which provide for accepting a credit card or debit card as payment. Such regulations may provide for the collection, where appropriate, of related fees, penalties and service charges for the use of a credit card or debit card by any consumer.

J. The Board shall post in a location that is conspicuous to the public within each government store a sign that bears a warning regarding the risks of consuming alcoholic beverages during pregnancy.