



Senate of Pennsylvania

Senator Larry Farnese
1st Senatorial District

MEMO

Date: *May 26, 2011*
To: *All Senators*
From: *Senator Lawrence M. Farnese, Jr.*
Subject: *Co-sponsorship – Liquor Code Amendments*

In the near future, I plan to introduce two pieces of legislation that would amend the Liquor Code.

The first would increase fines for violations of the Liquor Code, as well as increase licensing fees. The revenues from both of these increases will be dedicated to the enforcement efforts of the Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement (BLCE) within the Pennsylvania State Police and the Office of Administrative Law Judge.

The Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board recently testified at a Senate Law and Justice Committee hearing that the fine structure for liquor code violations has been unchanged since 1987. This 24-year lack of increases has stunted revenues that have not kept up with the cost of enforcement by the BLCE. In the PLCB modernization proposal, they advocate for increased fines to address this issue.

The PLCB also testified that the current fee structure for licensing has been unchanged since 1991. In turn, insufficient revenue has been ascertained to cover the PLCB's costs that fund the BLCE operating budget.

This legislation would help fund enforcement efforts by our BLCE officers. It is my hope this legislation would not only provide additional revenues to the BLCE, but also deter nuisance owners from allowing violations to occur.

A second piece of legislation would give the BLCE the authority to, upon dangerous activity involving drugs or violence, immediately shut down nuisance establishments. Current law does not allow the BLCE to do so. Their inability to take this type of action continues to put communities at risk due to illegal activities.

9 people were shot in a recent incident at a club in Feltonville in Philadelphia, an establishment with a history of gun-violent activity, including a dance-floor shooting in December and the death of a man walking home from the club on New Year's Day. It is time to give the BLCE the authority to immediately shut down nuisance establishments where dangerous activities in direct threat to the public safety are committed so that these types of activities are not allowed to continue.

If you are interested in co-sponsoring this legislation, please contact Brandie Pifer at 7-5662 or bpifer@pasenate.com. If you have any questions, please contact Sally Keaveney at skeaveney@pasenate.com.