

February 9, 2021

The Honorable Representative John Hunt, Chair
House Commerce Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 302
Concord, NH 03301

Re: New Futures Opposition to HB 176, allowing beverages, wine, and mixed drinks to be sold for take out and delivery by restaurants holding an on-premises license

Dear Representative Hunt and Honorable Members of the Committee;

New Futures is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that advocates, educates, and collaborates to improve the health and wellness of all New Hampshire residents through policy change. In this role, we work extensively with policy makers, stakeholders, and prevention partners to prevent and reduce alcohol and other drug problems in our state. **New Futures opposes HB 176, because it is irresponsible legislation that will increase the accessibility and availability of alcohol through the delivery of cocktails “to go”.**

Last spring Governor Sununu issued Executive Order 6 which temporarily allows for takeout or delivery of limited amounts of beer and wine. HB 176 adds “cocktails to go”. This policy change would be a monumental shift in New Hampshire's current regulatory system. Policies such as this one is in place to protect public health and safety.¹ For these reasons New Futures, opposes policies, that further erode government controls regulating the retail sale of alcohol, and the loosening of the three-tier alcohol control system.

The harms and costs of alcohol abuse are astounding and are often lost in the shadows of the opioid epidemic. Excessive alcohol use continues to be a major driver of mortality in the United States, contributing to approximately 88,000 deaths annually, including one in every 10 deaths among adults 20 to 64 years of age.² During the COVID-19 pandemic, alcohol consumption has increased among certain subgroups within the population – especially among women, African Americans, and people with children – and patterns of alcohol sales have shifted from on-premise sales to off-premises sales.^{3,4}

¹ APHA, Addressing Alcohol-Related Harms: A Population Level Response, Nov. 5th 2019

<https://apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2020/01/14/addressing-alcohol-related-harms-a-population-level-response>

² Stahre M, Roeber J, Kanny D, Brewer RD, Zhang X. Contribution of excessive alcohol consumption to deaths and years of potential life lost in the United States. *Prev Chronic Dis.* 2014;11:E109.

³ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2770975>

⁴ Durbin, D. (2020, Aug. 24). Number of states allowing to-go cocktails has surged from 2 to 33 during coronavirus. *Fortune*. Retrieved from

<https://fortune.com/2020/08/24/states-allowing-to-go-cocktails-surges-liquor-laws-coronavirus/>

The shift toward off-premise alcohol sales has public health and safety implications. There is a stronger association between off-premise alcohol sales and harms than between on-premise sales and harms, including increased rates of violence, alcohol hospital admissions and impaired driving.⁵ Even before the pandemic, alcohol compliance checks conducted in several states in response to complaints of youth accessing alcohol through home delivery or curbside delivery have shown high rates of non-compliance with alcohol being provided or sold to minors.⁶ This bill does not provide any additional supports to the NH Liquor Enforcement to address these concerns.

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, New Hampshire has some of the highest rates of alcohol use and binge drinking among young adults in the country. Alcohol dependence and abuse reduces New Hampshire's labor force by over 12,000 individuals or by 1.65 percent.⁷ **Productivity losses including reduced labor force participation and reduced earnings of alcohol dependent workers, account for the largest share of costs associated with substance abuse in New Hampshire, an estimated \$1.56 billion in 2014.**⁷

New Hampshire is currently struggling with a substance misuse epidemic-exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic- and alcohol remains the most prevalent substance misused in the United States and New Hampshire. This state cannot afford to weaken New Hampshire's alcohol regulations.

New Futures urges the committee to vote Inexpedient to Legislate on HB 176.

Sincerely,



Kathryn (Kate) Frey
Vice President of Advocacy

⁵ [Best Practice Guidance for Alcohol Sales and Deliveries During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

⁶ [The new speakeasy: Uber Eats has turned into a rogue cocktail bar](#)

⁷ <https://new-futures.org/sites/default/files/pages/attachments/2017 Economic Report Final.pdf>

