

For Immediate Release



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CALIFORNIA GROCERS URGE GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER TO VETO UNNECESSARY LEGISLATION AIMED AT ELIMINATING ASSISTED CHECKOUT SYSTEMS

Union-backed AB 1060 is a solution in search of a problem.

SACRAMENTO, CA - (August 24, 2010) – The California Grocers Association is urging Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to veto legislation passed Monday in the State Senate that would effectively ban assisted checkout systems in supermarkets.

“Assembly Bill 1060 presents itself as feel good legislation but in reality is about punishing innovation and protecting saving union dues checks,” said CGA President Ronald Fong. “Its target is one non-union grocer which utilizes an assisted checkout system as its primary form of finalizing customer sales.”

The bill would prohibit the sale of alcoholic beverages through assisted checkout systems. It makes the assumption that minors or intoxicated individuals can manipulate the system to illegally obtain alcoholic beverages.

The use of assisted checkout terminals in retail settings does not increase access to alcohol by minors or intoxicated persons, nor does it increase incidents of theft. According to the Senate Government Organization Committee analysis of the bill, “...ABC staff indicates that they have no evidence of any problems associated with minors purchasing alcoholic beverages through self -service checkouts.”

“Current law places a grocer’s alcoholic sales license in jeopardy if inappropriate sales are identified through either the assisted or traditional checkout options,” Fong said. “Losing this license would seriously impact a retailer’s business. No retailer would put themselves in that situation.”

Assisted checkouts contain appropriate safety protocol including the system locking when any age-restricted product is scanned, requiring a clerk to verify age and sobriety, and when even slight variations in weight of product scanned and product bagged are detected.

Grocers also utilize additional means to prevent theft or inappropriate access including security cameras, customer interaction throughout the shopping experience, staff training, strict inventory control protocols and the placement of both products and checkout stations themselves.

“California grocers take seriously their responsibility to ensure that only those individuals legally entitled to purchase alcohol do so in grocery stores,” Fong said. “CGA fully supports efforts of the state’s regulatory agency to enforce existing laws regarding sales of alcohol. We encourage Governor Schwarzenegger to veto this unnecessary legislation.”

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The California Grocers Association is a non-profit trade association representing the food industry since 1898. CGA represents approximately 500 retail members operating over 6,000 food stores in California and Nevada, and approximately 200 grocery supplier companies. Retail membership includes chain and independent supermarkets, convenience stores and mass merchandisers.