



AT THE BAR WITH BOWDITCH

A Legal Blog for the Craft Brewing Community

Give It Away, Give It Away, Give It Away, Now? Craft Brewers May Soon Be Able to Donate Product to Charity

BY ROBERT G. YOUNG • JUNE 24, 2015

Under Massachusetts law, brewers cannot donate their beer to charitable organizations for use at fundraisers (whether to serve or to offer as an auction item). But that may be about to change. Representative Alice Hanlon Peisch has introduced two bills that would amend Massachusetts law to put beer (and other spirits) on the same footing as wine, which currently can be donated to charity. One bill would amend Massachusetts law to allow the local licensing authority to grant temporary licenses to charitable organizations to sell wine, beer or malt liquor, so long as the wine, beer or malt liquor is donated to the charitable organization free of charge. The other bill would allow charitable organization to accept donations of alcoholic beverages from any person, manufacturer, wholesaler or package stores to be served at a fundraising event.

The bills have been referred to the Committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure. A hearing on the bills that had been scheduled for June 16 has been postponed, with no new date scheduled as of yet.

Nevertheless, the progress of these bills bears monitoring, and the Red Hot Chili Peppers may yet get their way. (That song is about charitable donations of beer, right?)