



Senate Bill 462 and Logoed Barware

By Brian DeBano, Michigan Restaurant Association President & CEO

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I would like to commend Senator Steve Bieda (D-Warren) for introducing common sense legislation that would allow Michigan restaurant and bar owners to do what their counterparts in every other state in the nation have always had the right to do – use logoed barware items like glassware, napkins, and coasters in their establishments. Think of your favorite iced cold Michigan microbrew in a glass specially designed and logoed to maximize its unique character and you'll get where I'm coming from!

Senate Bill 462 states that the Michigan Liquor Control Commission "shall not prohibit or require prior approval for an on-premises licensee from furnishing or using brand-logoed novelty items on its premises." While no statute exists that specifically bans the purchase and use of these novelty items, a long-standing rule coinciding with the Liquor Control Code (R436.1321) bans their use unless given special allowance by the Commission.

If you're thinking this kind of law is Lansing overreach at its most peculiar (if not absurd), you're not alone! A recent statewide poll conducted by the Marketing Research Group showed that 75 percent of Michiganders stated they either strongly or somewhat supported a legislative fix to the state's one-of-a-kind ban on logoed barware. Only 9 percent actually opposed a change to the law, with the remaining uncertain either way.

While states have widely varying statutes and rules regarding the extent to which novelty barware items may be given to restaurants and bars as gifts, Michigan is the only state in the nation that prevents them from even purchasing those items at fair market value.

Members of my association, as you can imagine, are frustrated by the ban. We are the hospitality industry, after all, and there is an inherent desire by restaurateurs to maximize the experience for every patron.

One member recently summed it up perfectly stating, "In some cases, and especially with premium items like craft beer, providing a logoed glass adds value to the overall experience for the customer and should be made available. I'm not asking for a handout, just the opportunity to respond to the demands of my customers."

Senator Bieda's bill is a great start down a path towards common sense reform for restaurant and bar owners and he has the full support of the Michigan Restaurant Association.

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