

A Testimony in Favor of Amending the Michigan Liquor Control Code

Allowing Community College Participation (SB 502),

Presented in the House Committee on Regulatory Reform

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Good morning, Chairman Crawford and members of the Committee, my name is Dan Phelan and I am the President of Jackson Community College, an institution located in the tri-county area of south central Michigan, serving about 11 credit students.

Jackson Community College is a quality and continuous improvement-based, data-informed organization that has been continually regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission since 1928. We are about a \$50M enterprise, comprised of over 684 full- and part-time employees who are committed to the success of our students. In terms of econometric impact of our College, an independent study revealed that JCC accounts for nearly \$200 million of all earnings in the south central Michigan economy and roughly 5,500 jobs. In terms of regional investment, we know that for every \$1 of revenue received at the College, we generate another \$8.48 in local area income.

With respect to this legislation (SB 502) JCC supports this bill because it will benefit our students in our Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management program. To be fully skilled, these students will be able to incorporate alcohol in meal production, engage in an understanding of wine pairings, wine and beer studies, tasting assessments, as well as the development of serving and sommelier skills.

Jackson's Culinary Arts Program has received regional and national recognition. You may even recall that JCC Culinary Arts students provided the heavy hors d'oeuvres during the recent Community College Day at the Capitol earlier in May.

Additionally, Jackson Community College hosts the renowned George E. Potter Center Performing Arts Center which distinguishes Jackson Community College from any other community college in Michigan. We take pride in our ability to serve our community's need for arts and entertainment. As part of our service to the community, we host and sponsor events and activities at the College that help advance the mission of our institution, including events for the Chamber of Commerce, Jackson Symphony Orchestra, Martin Luther King, Jr., and other economic development events, for which we'd like to make adult beverages available, which would be presented by our culinary students.

While citizens of Jackson County affectionately refer to the Potter Center as the "community's living room," our campus is located six miles south of town in a remote, rural region of southern Jackson County. JCC is far enough away from the city that this does not allow time for patrons to leave during intermission and come back before the event resumes.

To make our case further, our local vintners support JCC's effort of offering alcohol at performing arts events. Letters from Cherry Creek Cellars, Lone Oak Vineyard Estate and Sandhill Crane Vineyards clearly articulate the wineries' support of JCC's efforts to obtain a liquor license. The College is a principal provider of these Jackson County wines to our patrons coming to College sponsored activities. Selling the local wines at College events will not only provide another desired local outlet for the wines, but more importantly, publicize the winery and wines to Jackson residents and

the surrounding communities. Additionally, JCC intends to buy directly from local beer distributors and help them out by adding another customer to their route.

To be certain, the College is not interested in selling alcohol for weddings, anniversaries or other celebratory events not related to our mission, or our instructional programming. These types of activities and related sales are best managed by private industry, which we regularly support.

Currently, the frequency and number of individual licenses that the College has to apply for each year to serve students and the community is problematic and is a logistical inefficiency. Specifically, we cannot submit a liquor license application more than thirty days in advance and we have to have enough time for the license to come back from the State for approval. After we undertake this effort, we then must make a trip to the Sheriff's Department for the law enforcement signature. Each license is \$25, plus \$50 for the required bond. And even though JCC hosts numerous shows, the current law allows for no more than twelve special one day liquor licenses to be granted to any one organization per calendar year. Regrettably, the current process inhibits our ability to serve our students and the community in support of our mission.

My final concern involves a matter of fairness which the current statute did not address as it constantly pits one college against the other in their attempts to be granted a license, however, SB 502 now removes the winner and loser connotation and provides the parameters for every college and university to get a license.

I respectfully request the members of this Committee to advance SB 502 in the interests of our culinary and hospitality students, as well as in the service of our mission. For Jackson community, passage of this legislation would generate immediate and beneficial economic activity with local vintners and beer distributors. Thank you for your consideration.