

## **Jared Blauweiss**

*Mr. B's Wine and Spirits*

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### **Topic:** Corkage Fees

Hello, My name is Jared Blauweiss. I have owned and operated 3 Mr. B's Wine and Spirits locations since our first location opened in 2009. In the last few years we have seen legislative changes that have put a major strain on our businesses, along with all those in the off-premise sector. Grocers and convenience stores were given the privilege of selling full strength beer. Grocery stores increased their ability to open additional full liquor licenses. And most recently, groceries and convenience stores were granted the privilege of also selling wine.

But the reason for my comment today is to address another issue that has had a detrimental effect on retail liquor stores. During the pandemic, the Governor issued an executive order permitting restaurants and bars the ability to sell wine, beer, and spirits to go. Restaurants were also afforded the ability to deliver these products to customers at their homes. Mr. B's supported this at the time as we knew our friends in the restaurant industry suffered greatly during the pandemic. These provisions have since become permanent and have put a further strain on retail liquor stores.

In virtually every other state where on premise licenses can sell wine and spirits to go, there are also corkage fees allowed at restaurants. This includes ALL of the most successful restaurant markets such as New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Miami, Seattle, Portland, New Orleans, Houston. The list goes on. I implore the committee to consider permitting corkage fees at restaurants so as to help level the playing field. In most states that allow corkage fees, restaurants are NOT REQUIRED to offer this service. Those that CHOOSE to offer them can decide what their fee to do so may be. It's pretty simple, if restaurants can sell alcohol for off premise consumption, they should also be at least allowed to pour wine purchased (perhaps from another restaurant) to be consumed on-premise.

Restaurants and consumers stand to gain from this as well. Many restaurants focus on the food and don't have "quality" beverage programs. Allowing corkage makes for a better customer experience and further entices the customer to patronize those restaurants that only focus on the food. Personally, there are many instances where I decide to get takeout from a restaurant instead of dining there because I want to drink well with my meal. Other times I choose another restaurant altogether. Many of the great restaurants in Colorado can't afford to hire sommeliers and expert bartenders. In reality, most restaurants don't operate this way if you look at the restaurant industry in our state as a whole. Many Colorado restaurants only seek liquor licenses to help entice consumers to consider them for dining, not to build a comprehensive program. Corkage fees would make for a better experience for all: restaurants, consumers, and liquor stores.

Thank you,  
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