

NORTH CAROLINA CHANGING FORMAT OF LICENSES FOR THOSE UNDER 21

ASSEMBLY PASSES VERTICAL ID LEGISLATION

RALEIGH (July 8, 2008) – Three major business organizations applauded legislation passed Monday night that will change the look of driver’s licenses to prevent the sale of alcohol to those under age 21.

House Bill 2487 will change the format of licenses from the standard horizontal layout to one that is vertical. The “Vertical ID” legislation is supported by the NC Petroleum & Convenience Marketers (NCPCM), the NC Retail Merchants Association (NCRMA), and the North Carolina Beer & Wine Wholesalers Association (NCBWWA).

“Preventing underage drinking has always been a top priority for local beer & wine distributors,” said Dean Plunkett, executive director of the NCBWWA, a strong supporter of the recommendation made by the NC Child Fatality Task Force. “Our distributors are strongly in support of concrete actions that reduce the ability of young people to buy beer and wine.”

A recent study showed that less than one in five alcohol retailers sold to minors. But almost 60 percent of those sales were made after identification was checked. Vertical ID proponents say educating alcohol vendors on age verification techniques is difficult, and reformatting licenses is a logical step toward combating underage drinking.

“A vertical driver’s license is instantly recognizable. No longer will store clerks be able to say they couldn’t calculate the age, or that they didn’t notice the color of the license,” said Rep. Dale Folwell, sponsor of the House legislation. “It’s a common sense solution that will ultimately cut down on the amount of alcohol that’s sold to underage people.”

Other supporters of the legislation include: NC Division of Alcohol Law Enforcement; NC Division of Motor Vehicles; NC Department of Insurance; NC Safe Kids; NC Pediatric Society.

“The law enforcement community and the alcoholic beverage industry have partnered together in a number of ways to combat underage drinking,” said William Chandler, director of NC Alcohol Law Enforcement. “The vertical driver’s license will be a tremendous tool as we continue that joint mission.”

More than 20 states currently use a “vertical driver’s license” to help clerks easily identify minors who are attempting to purchase alcohol.

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