

**CONFIDENTIAL**  
**LEGISLATIVE BILL REVIEW FORM: 2014**

**Bill Number:** H.385 **Name of Bill:** Alcoholic Beverages; general provisions; library exemption  
Also: S.226

**Agency/ Dept:** Admin/Libraries **Author of Bill Review:** Martha Reid, State Librarian

**Date of Bill Review:** 1/9/14

**Status of Bill: (check one):**

☒ In Committee (House: General Housing & Military Affairs)  
(Senate: Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs)

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**Recommended Position:**

☐ Support    ☐ Oppose    ☐ Remain Neutral    ☒ Support with modifications identified in #8 below

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**Analysis of Bill**

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**1. Summary of bill and issue it addresses.** *Describe what the bill is intended to accomplish and why.*

Exempts libraries so that they "may serve without a license malt and vineous beverages free of charge by the individual glass .... [at] events open to the public ...."

**2. Is there a need for this bill?** *Please explain why or why not.*

Yes. Libraries (especially incorporated public libraries) are obligated to do local fund-raising to support operating costs and meet budget demands. In FY2012, 17% of revenue for Vermont's 183 public libraries came from local sources, including local fundraising efforts. Fundraising events include dinners, receptions, author talks, etc. and would be enhanced in some instances by including beer/wine. I have spoken with library trustees at the Woodstock library (for which local sources of income made up 40% of total library revenue in FY2012) and they expressed the need for this exemption. As I understand it, their interest sparked the introduction of this bill. Other libraries would echo this need.

I have worked in libraries in other states that allow alcohol in libraries and it can be a nice addition to evening events. One example, (though I have never worked in FL), was the West Palm Beach Library that sponsored wine and jazz Friday nights during the winter to integrate "snow birds" into the local community.

**3. What are likely to be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for this Department?**

No real fiscal impact.

Our department provides consulting services to local libraries, trustees and "friends" groups and we would include this information in our consulting/trainings on fundraising. Local libraries would need to have "at least one employee of the library [with] ... training in the service of alcoholic beverages" but that training would not come from our Department.

Our library could assist with policy development for those libraries that choose to allow alcohol at public events.

**4. What might be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for other departments in state government, and what is likely to be their perspective on it?**

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This may have some impact for the Liquor Control Board; I have not contacted them about this bill. Agriculture and Economic Development may have an interest –especially if the bill required the use of Vermont-produced alcoholic products.

- 5. What might be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for others, and what is likely to be their perspective on it?** *(for example, public, municipalities, organizations, business, regulated entities, etc)*  
This would, of course, be voluntary for libraries and may present some conflict with municipal regulations, particularly for municipal libraries.

It would allow for use of Vermont-produced wines and beers and could support local businesses.

There might be some community members/groups that object to the use of alcohol at library events or in library buildings. Local policies could restrict alcohol to library events which take place outside of regular library business hours, or at events that do not include minors.

Libraries would be responsible to regulate use of alcohol (minors; intoxication) and for that reason may not be a choice in some communities.

## **6. Other Stakeholders:**

### **6.1 Who else is likely to support the proposal and why?**

Vermont Library Association has registered support of this bill.

### **6.2 Who else is likely to oppose the proposal and why?**

Religious community?

Groups such as MADD?

## **7. Rationale for recommendation:** *Justify recommendation stated above.*

Local libraries/municipalities will be the final arbiter of whether or not they want to implement use of alcohol, but this bill would give them the option, which will be attractive in limited (but important) ways. Lack of state funding for public libraries in Vermont obligates them to do substantial fundraising and this would give them a “leg up” to do just that.

## **8. Specific modifications that would be needed to recommend support of this bill:** *Not meant to rewrite bill, but rather, an opportunity to identify simple modifications that would change recommended position.*

I support this bill as written, but think it would be stronger if it included language changes, such as:

- a. “...provided that at least one employee or official representative of the library such as Library Trustee has received training in the service of alcoholic beverages ...”
- b. greater clarity about the use of the term “library.” I believe the intent of this bill is for public libraries. Libraries are also present in colleges, schools, churches, law offices, etc. That could be a matter for discussion.
- c. Consider restricting this to Vermont alcohol products. I am not sure what impact this would have on cost of alcohol (and impact on fundraising potential), but there would certainly be support from local producers.

**Secretary/Commissioner has reviewed this document:** Martha Reid Date: 1/9/14.

**I would like to offer testimony that supports this bill in both the House and Senate.**

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In advance I would talk to committee chairs about possible changes to bill language.