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Beverage Retailers Celebrate Anniversary of Repeal of Prohibition; Guard Against its Return

Bethesda, MD – December 5, 2011 – On this the seventy-eighth anniversary of the repeal of America’s failed thirteen-year experiment called Prohibition, licensed beverage retailers continue to uphold their longstanding legacy that began before Prohibition and has continued to flourish to this today under the three-tier system established following the ratification of the Twenty-first Amendment on December 5, 1933.

“On Repeal Day, it’s important to both remember the dark days of Prohibition and celebrate the establishment of our vibrant, diverse and well-balanced industry based on a three-tier system that has served Americans to great success over the last seventy-eight years,” said John D. Bodnovich, ABL’s Executive Director.

Local taverns and package liquor stores have played an important role in the development of American hospitality and the country’s communities. Now they hold an important role in the American economy providing an untold number of people with their first job. Many of these businesses continue to be family-owned and operated just as they have been since the repeal of Prohibition.

Just as with their businesses, beverage licensees’ participation in trade associations at the national level also extends back to the repeal of Prohibition. The National Liquor Stores Association was formed in 1935, just 15 months after the repeal of Prohibition. Its on-premise sibling, the Associated Tavern Owners of America, was founded just 11 years later in 1946.

Despite the failings of the “noble experiment” of Prohibition and the rightful place that beverage alcohol has held in American culture for hundreds of years, beverage licensees continue to guard against the return of Prohibition in any form. That means supporting sensible drunk driving policy that does not make it illegal to have a glass of wine at dinner, a beer at a barbeque or a cocktail at happy hour and then drive home.

It also means fighting tax increases that penalize middle class and lower-income Americans and their ability to enjoy their favorite beverage alcohol products; providing unparalleled education, customer service, and access to tens of thousands of beer, wine and spirits products; supporting locally-owned bars, taverns and package liquor stores and the people they employ; and making sure that the views of those who seek to marginalize the good work of the hospitality industry are sufficiently debunked.

“Beverage retailers often view themselves as the last line of defense for the hospitality industry and are proud to man that post,” said Bodnovich. “They are the last in the industry to handle beverage alcohol products and can have a great influence on how those products are used. But they also have the most to lose when the responsible use of beer, wine and spirits is under attack. As we become further removed from the Prohibition era, it becomes increasingly important to remind ourselves, our friends and neighbors just what a terrible mistake it was so that we never make it again.”

About American Beverage Licensees (ABL)

American Beverage Licensees (ABL) is the preeminent national trade association for beverage alcohol retailers. Its members are comprised of on-premise and off-premise licensees who provide hundreds of thousands of jobs and annually infuse millions of dollars into the American economy. To learn more about ABL, visit www.ablusa.org.