

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
DISTRICT OF MARYLAND

ROB BUSHNELL, and )  
KAREN G. and STEPHEN WRIGHT )  
d/b/a WRIGHT WINE WORKS, )  
*Plaintiffs,* )  
 )  
vs. )  
 )  
ROBERT L. EHRLICH, JR, )  
Governor; )  
J. JOSEPH CURRAN, JR., )  
Attorney General; )  
and WILLIAM DONALD SCHAEFER, )  
Comptroller, )  
*Defendants* )

**COMPLAINT**

Plaintiffs make the following allegations for their Complaint based upon information and belief, except for the allegations pertaining to Plaintiffs, which are based upon personal knowledge.

**INTRODUCTION**

This is a civil rights action brought pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 1983 challenging the constitutionality of the Maryland Annotated Code §7.-103, §7.5-104, §7.5-105, § 7.5-106, §7.-108, which prohibit out-of-state wineries from selling and shipping wine directly to consumers and restaurants within the State of Maryland. Plaintiffs seek a declaratory judgment that this statutory scheme violates the Commerce Clause of the United States Constitution and that Plaintiffs have been deprived under color of law of their constitutional rights and privileges to engage in interstate commerce. Plaintiffs seek an injunction barring Defendants from enforcing these laws to prohibit out-of-state wineries from selling and shipping wine directly to consumers and restaurants.

### **JURISDICTION**

1. This Court has jurisdiction to hear this case pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§1331 and 1343(a)(3), which confer original jurisdiction on federal district courts to hear suits alleging the violation of rights and privileges under the United States Constitution.

2. This Court has authority to grant declaratory relief pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§2201 and 2202.

### **PLAINTIFFS**

6. Plaintiff Rob Bushnell is a resident of Silver Springs, Maryland, which is in Montgomery County. He is over the age of twenty-one, does not live in a dry county, and is legally permitted to purchase, receive, possess and drink wine at that address. He is a regular purchaser and consumer of wine, and would purchase bottled wine from out-of-state wineries and have those wines shipped to his residence if Maryland law permitted him to do so.

7. Wright Wine Works is a Pennsylvania partnership that operates a winery in Barto, Pennsylvania. It holds all necessary Pennsylvania and federal licenses and permits to manufacture and sell wine in interstate commerce. It intends to sell and ship wines directly to Rob Bushnell and other consumers at their residences, and to licensed restaurants at their places of business, in the State of Maryland, if the laws prohibiting such sales and shipments are removed or declared unconstitutional.

8. Plaintiffs intend to pay all taxes that may be due on such interstate shipments and to comply with all other state regulations.

### **DEFENDANTS**

9. Defendants are sued in their official capacities.

10. Defendant Ehrlich is Governor of the State of Maryland and is generally responsible for executive decisions in the state.

11. Defendant Curran is Attorney General for the State of Maryland and is generally responsible for the enforcement for Maryland state laws, including laws pertaining to the sale and transportation of alcohol.

12. Defendant Schaefer is the Comptroller of the State of Maryland which has general authority for licensing and regulation of wine and wineries both in-state and out-of-state.

13. Defendants are acting under color of state law when they enforce or supervise the enforcement of the statutes and regulations challenged herein.

**COMMERCE CLAUSE VIOLATION COUNT I:  
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST OUT-OF-STATE WINERIES WITH RESPECT  
TO SALES TO CONSUMERS**

14. In the State of Maryland, an in-state winery may obtain a license which allows it to sell Maryland wine directly to individuals and retailers without going through a separate wholesaler, pursuant to Maryland Annotated Code §2-201.

15. Maryland's wineries are also permitted to sell and deliver their wines at the wineries and tasting rooms to consumers and other classes of customers.

16. Wright Wine Works and other wineries located outside the State of Maryland may not sell, deliver or ship their wine directly to consumers in the State of Maryland. They may only sell their wine through a separate wholesaler or by filling orders to Maryland consumers which require the wine be sent first to a Maryland wholesaler and then to a Maryland retailer, subject to markup and other fees.

17. Rob Bushnell wants to buy wine directly from Wright Wine Works and other wineries outside Maryland and to have the wine delivered to his residence. He is willing to pay all taxes on such purchases.

18. Wright Wine Works is located in the state of Pennsylvania, produces bottled wine for commercial sale, and wants to sell its wine directly to Rob Bushnell and other consumers in the State of Maryland by Internet and to ship the wine to the customers' residences.

19. Wright Wine Works has previously received requests from residents of the State of Maryland to sell, deliver and ship wine to them.

20. Plaintiffs cannot complete the transactions described in paragraphs 17 to 19 because the laws of the State of Maryland prohibit them.

21. If Wright Wine Works were permitted to sell and deliver its wine directly to consumers in the State of Maryland, it would comply with all applicable laws and regulations concerning permits, licenses, labeling, reporting, proof of age, and payment of taxes.

22. The laws of the State of Maryland treat interstate sales and delivery of wine to adults differently from intra-state sales and delivery of wine to adults, discriminate against out-of-state wineries, and provide economic advantages and protection to wineries in Maryland, all in violation of the Commerce Clause of the United States Constitution.

**COMMERCE CLAUSE VIOLATION COUNT II:  
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST OUT-OF-STATE WINERIES WITH RESPECT  
TO SALES TO LICENSED RETAIL WINE SELLERS**

23. In the State of Maryland, an in-state winery may sell, deliver and ship its wine directly to retail wine dealers, including restaurants, for resale to consumers, if the winery obtains a license to manufacture wine from the Defendants.

24. The Defendants will issue the license described in the above paragraph only to wineries located within the State of Maryland that are making wine from Maryland fruit. The Defendants will not issue the license to Wright Wine Works or other wineries located outside the State.

25. Wright Wine Works and other wineries located outside State of Maryland may not sell, deliver or ship their wine directly to licensed retail dealers in the State of Maryland, but may only sell their wine through a separate wholesaler.

26. Wright Wine Works is located in the state of Pennsylvania, produces bottled wine for commercial sale, and wants to sell its wine directly to restaurants and other retail dealers in the State of Maryland, but is prohibited from doing so by the laws of the State of Maryland.

27. If Wright Wine Works were permitted to sell and deliver its wine directly to restaurants, it would comply with all applicable laws and regulations concerning permits, licenses, reporting, labeling, proof of age, and payment of taxes.

28. The laws of the State of Maryland treat interstate sales and delivery of wine to retail wine dealers differently from intra-state sales and delivery of wine to retail dealers, discriminate against out-of-state wineries, and provide economic advantages and protection to Maryland wineries, all in violation of the Commerce Clause of the United States Constitution

**REQUEST FOR RELIEF**

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs seek the following relief:

A. Judgment that Maryland Annotated Code §7.-103, §7.5-104, §7.5-105, §7.5-106, §7.-108 are unconstitutional, to the extent that they prohibit out-of-state wineries from selling and delivering wine directly to consumers and restaurants in State of Maryland, as a violation of the Commerce Clause of the United States Constitution.

B. An injunction prohibiting Defendants from enforcing those statutes and requiring them to allow out-of-state wineries to sell and deliver wine directly to consumers and restaurants in Maryland.

C. Plaintiffs do not request that the State be enjoined from collecting any tax due on the sale of wine.

D. An award of costs and expenses, including reasonable attorneys' fees pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1988.

E. Such other relief as the Court deems appropriate to afford Plaintiffs full relief.

Respectfully submitted,

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Robert D. Epstein ( Indiana Attorney No. 6726-49)  
EPSTEIN COHEN DONAHOE & MENDES  
50 S. Meridian St., Suite 505  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
Tel: 317-639-1326  
Fax: 317-638-9891  
rdepstein@aol.com  
*Motion to appear Pro Hac Vice pending*

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James A. Tanford (Indiana Attorney No. 16982-53)  
Indiana University School of Law  
211 South Indiana Avenue  
Bloomington, IN 47405  
Tel: 812-855-4846  
Fax: 812-855-0555  
tanford@indiana.edu  
*Motion to appear Pro Hac Vice pending*

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Jay Cohen  
Chevy Chase Building  
Suite 1127  
5530 Wisconsin Avenue  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815  
Tel: 301-652-1153  
Fax: 301-652-1154