



# Maryland State Licensed Beverage Association

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## **MSLBA 2026 End of Session Report**

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The 449th Session of the Maryland General Assembly convened at noon on Wednesday, January 14th, and adjourned at midnight on Monday, April 13th. Major changes took place just prior to the start of the session, beginning with the election of Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk as Speaker of the House. Her selection prompted a significant reorganization of House leadership, committee structure, and committee assignments, creating a learning curve for legislators, staff, and lobbyists alike.

The number of House standing committees increased from six to seven with the creation of the House Government, Labor & Elections (GLE) Committee, chaired by Delegate Melissa Wells, with Delegate Ken Kerr serving as vice chair. The addition of this new committee redistributed subject matters across committees and reassigned members accordingly. For example, the Economic Matters Committee continued to have jurisdiction over the legislation proposing beer and wine in supermarkets, while the GLE Committee was given jurisdiction over other statewide alcohol bills and all local alcohol bills. In addition, all seven standing committees saw changes in leadership, with new chairs, vice chairs, or both, and an expansion in the number of subcommittees.

With the conclusion of the 2026 session, attention now turns to the upcoming elections. The primary election is scheduled for June 23, 2026, followed by the general election on November 3, 2026. In Maryland, all members of the General Assembly and statewide elected officials are up for reelection. Prior to adjournment, several legislators announced they would not seek another term, including Senator Pamela Beidle (D-32, Anne Arundel County), Chair of the Senate Finance Committee. Throughout her distinguished career, Senator Beidle has been an avid supporter of the small businesses that comprise the alcoholic beverage industry and has done so many things to protect them, many of which people never see. To say she will be missed doesn't come close to demonstrating the appreciation that she deserves.

With that, here is a summary of where the major pieces of legislation that MSLBA was involved with ended up. A full bill profile is also provided separately, which provides the results on every bill we tracked.

### **Supermarket Legislation**

[HB 1303](#) - *Alcoholic Beverages - Class A License - Retail Establishments (Alcoholic Beverages Modernization Act of 2026) (Failed)*

[SB 75](#) – *Alcoholic Beverages – Class A License – Food Retailers (Failed)*

[HB 415](#) *Prince George's County - Alcoholic Beverages - Class A Beer and Class A Beer and Wine Licenses - Retail Grocery Establishments PG 304-26 (Failed)*

To no one's surprise, legislation to allow beer and wine in supermarkets was introduced, with statewide bills and a local bill from Prince George's County. While the bills did not pass, it is clear that the debate around these bills has escalated with the continued turnover in the General Assembly. As that continues, this issue and its outcome are subject to change and have to be evaluated year to year.

For this year, we once again had excellent witness testimony in opposition to the supermarket bills from MSLBA members Jack Milani (Balt Co), Jaskinder Gill (Prince George's), Kim Lawson (AA Co), Jed Jenny (Balt City), Blaise Miller (Prince George's), Jimmy Spiropoulos (Prince George's), Ashish Parikh (Carroll Co), Jeryl Cole (Balt City), Julianne Sullivan (AA Co), Anup Zalavadia (Dorchester) as well as our allies from the MD Beer Wholesalers represented by Nick Manis, the MD Distillers Guild, Brewers Association and Wineries Association, represented by Brad Rifkin, and the University of MD Public Health Law Center represented by Kathy Hoke.

While this outcome is a victory for our members, the issue will return.

### **Alcohol Sales by Manufacturers**

[HB 1552/SB 958](#) *Alcoholic Beverages - Class L Beer, Wine, and Liquor License – Established (Failed)*

This legislation would allow breweries, wineries, and distilleries to serve not just the products they manufacture at their facilities, but also the products of other manufacturers. MSLBA has strongly and consistently opposed this effort. But the appetite for making this change has clearly grown, and holding this legislation off has become more difficult. Furthermore, on a separate but related matter, there is ongoing litigation between the State and out-of-state manufacturers seeking delivery privileges. It is our hope that ahead of the 2027 Session, we can find a way to resolve both issues.

### **Recycling Issues**

[HB 331/SB 342](#) *Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program (FAILED)*

These or similar bills have been introduced for many years, and would have required retailers, including liquor stores, to accept redeemable beverage containers at their place of business, maintain a "dedicated area" to store the returned containers, and pay the person redeeming the container in cash. MSLBA opposed this legislation, and it did not advance in either chamber.

[HB 92](#) *Environment - Beverage Containers Connected with Plastic Rings - Restriction on Sale (FAILED)*

This bill would have banned the use of certain plastic rings used with beverages. It was unclear what was permissible versus not under the legislation, and ultimately the bill did not pass.

## **Lottery**

### **[HB 371/SB 708](#) *State Lottery - Courier Services – Licensure (FAILED)***

This bill, introduced last year as well, would have allowed third party entities to take electronic orders for lottery tickets. Companies like Jackpot.com have been successful in entering other states and attempted to do so here, with promises of higher lottery revenue given the greater ease of purchasing tickets. Legislators were not convinced of the security of this program and did not like that the company directs consumers to certain brick and mortar locations for cashing, and for these reasons the bills did not advance.

## **Other**

### **[HB 766/SB 623](#) *Retail Tobacco Businesses and Establishment of a Premium Cigar Lounge Alcoholic Beverages License (Maryland Premium Cigar Lounge Act of 2026)(FAILED)***

These bills were the result of a workgroup established to address the patchwork of county laws on the issuance of licenses to “cigar bars.” Some counties have issued them, others have refused to, based on the indoor smoking ban. This bill would have created a license that could be issued to such businesses, but with population limits. In the end, the House amended the bill down to simply prohibit any more such licenses from being issued through 2027 but it did not get called for a vote.

### **[SB 1008](#) - *Alcohol and Cannabis - Cannabinoid Beverages Off-Premises Sales Permit – Establishment (FAILED)***

This bill would have authorized off-premise alcoholic beverage licensees to sell cannabinoid beverages.

### **[HB 1229/SB 886](#) - *Consumer Protection and Labor and Employment - Food Service Facilities and Minimum Wage (FAILED)***

This bill would have put into the MD Constitution language providing for a minimum wage and increased the current minimum wage.

### **[HB 611](#) - *Prince George’s County – Alcoholic Beverages – License Fees (FAILED)***

This bill was originally a license fee increase but was amended by the Senate to include a ban on advertising and to require additional ownership information upon license transfer. The House Delegation did not approve of the Senate changes and the bill, including the license fee increases, died as a result.

