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## **Americans Overwhelmingly Support State Regulation of Alcohol**

### ***Center for Alcohol Policy Releases Survey Results on Public Attitudes on Alcohol Policy***

SPRINGFIELD, IL – April 2011 According to a new national poll conducted by a bipartisan team of pollsters, Whitman Insight Strategies and Wilson Research Strategies, only 22 percent of those polled responded that the free market should apply to alcohol regulation. The survey shows that 77 percent of adults support “the rights of individual states to set their own laws and regulations” regarding the sale of alcohol.

“The survey results show that Americans overwhelmingly agree that alcohol is a unique product that requires effective regulation, and they support keeping decisions about alcohol at the state and local level,” said Patrick Lynch, former Rhode Island Attorney General, former president of the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG), and current member of the Advisory Council of the Center for Alcohol Policy (CAP) which released the study.

The Illinois General Assembly is currently addressing the issue of self distribution by brewers. Anheuser-Busch InBev (ABI) wants to own distributorships which would weaken the state’s three-tier regulatory system. Each tier (manufacturer, distributor, and retailer) is intended to be a separate, independent business. The survey shows that 76 percent of adults support the current regulatory system that includes the producer-distributor-retailer-consumer chain. Support is very strong across the demographic spectrum and includes over 70 percent of those who generally favor the free market over regulation. This demonstrates that even those who philosophically oppose regulations support the current system when it comes to alcohol.

“The CAP survey shows that American adults understand the importance of independent, locally-owned businesses in the three-tier regulatory system,” said Bill Olson, president of the Associated Beer Distributors of Illinois. “The survey showed that less than one in five adults believes global corporations should be in charge of alcohol distribution. A strong majority of adults want local businesses that will be responsive to their community to handle alcohol distribution. This survey is very relevant because Anheuser-Busch is trying to get the ability to own distributorships. Anheuser-Busch is owned by the international brewer InBev, located in Belgium.”

InBev is recognized for its cost cutting measures. Within two (2) months of acquiring Anheuser-Busch, the workforce was reduced by 1,400 people. “If ABI is allowed to own distributorships, there is the potential that they will eliminate jobs in Illinois which would harm Illinois’ economy and reduce Illinois’ tax base when taxes are needed to meet the State’s obligations,” Olson continued.

ABI filed suit in federal court after the Illinois Liquor Control Commission (LCC) denied their request to purchase four Anheuser-Busch distributorships. “The attempted purchase was declared illegal by the state liquor authority since it

would collapse the required three-tier regulatory structure,” stated Pam Erickson, former executive director of the Oregon Liquor Control Commission and author of *The Dangers of Alcohol Deregulation: the United Kingdom Experience*.

The CAP survey results show:

- 77% support the right of individual states to set their own laws and regulations surrounding the sale of alcohol
- 84% believe that with the overwhelming majority of alcohol sold in the United States being manufactured by foreign-owned global corporations, it is more important than ever that state and localities maintain their ability to regulate alcohol
- 87% believe that all alcohol sold in their state should come through a licensed system which effectively tracks the steps it takes from producer to the consumer
- 83% believe state and local laws regarding alcohol regulations should be decided by lawmakers, not judges
- 71% believe that since alcohol is different than other consumer products, it needs a different set of rules and the state should be regulating the industry
- 75% believe local businesses should be in charge of alcohol distribution in their community since they better understand the preference of their community

The national telephone survey of 1,000 adults was conducted on behalf of the Center for Alcohol Policy in March 2011. The margin of error is +/- 3.1%.

The Associated Beer Distributors of Illinois, a not for profit business trade association, represents, maintains, and improves the interests of its members who distribute beer of all brewers. ABDI advocates value in the state-based regulatory system by being the unified voice for beer distributors on legislation and regulation, by promoting responsible beer consumption, and by providing educational and other services to meet its members’ needs. Distributors are licensed by the State of Illinois to import and distribute beer to licensed retailers.

For more information about ABDI visit [www.abdi.org](http://www.abdi.org). The Center for Alcohol Policy (CAP) survey is available at [http://www.centerforalcoholpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/CAP\\_National\\_Alcohol\\_Survey\\_2011.pdf](http://www.centerforalcoholpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/CAP_National_Alcohol_Survey_2011.pdf)

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