

Candidate's Name: Hans Riemer Office Sought: County Council At-Large

Candidate Questionnaire from VOCAL MOCO

Background: Voters Opposing County Alcohol Laws in Montgomery County, Maryland (VOCAL MOCO) is a nonprofit advocacy organization established by Montgomery County consumers. Its purpose is to end MOCO's alcohol monopoly and modernize the County's alcohol laws. Our website is located at www.vocalmoco.org

VOCAL MOCO realizes an end to the County's alcohol monopoly and modernization of its alcohol laws will require legislation at the County and State levels that may ultimately require popular referenda.

Accordingly, VOCAL MOCO asks:

1. If elected, would you support legislation to end Montgomery County's wholesale monopoly on the sale of liquor, wine and beer to restaurants and wine and beer to County retailers?

Yes

2. If elected, would you support legislation to end the County's retail monopoly on the sale of liquor and permit licensed County retailers to sell liquor?

Yes

3. If elected, would you not only support legislation ending the County's monopoly but support ending the County's wholesale and retail alcohol sales altogether?

No

4. If elected, would you support legislation to permit grocery stores, convenience and other stores, large and small, to sell alcoholic beverages, subject to reasonable licensing requirements, as is allowed in DC and Virginia?

Yes

5. If elected, would you support efforts to address any revenue shortfall resulting from an end to the County's monopoly, including requiring the State of Maryland to allot a portion of sales taxes on County alcohol sales to the County?

Yes

6. If the monopoly were ended, would you support efforts to help affected County Department of Liquor Control employees transition to good public and private sector jobs?

Yes

7. Finally, if elected, would you support legislation that would remove statutory and regulatory impediments to the growth and success of Maryland's craft beer industry, specifically provisions that cap production, sale, and distribution of Maryland craft beer products?

PLEASE SEND COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE TO ken@vocalmoco.org BY MAY 24, 2018

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Yes

Additional Comments?

I have worked hard to modernize our liquor laws, and my work has resulted in the most significant changes possibly since prohibition was repealed. But we have more to do.

In 2013 I asked the County Executive to create a Nighttime Economy Task Force, which successfully led to many important changes in liquor laws (such as allowing establishments to open later at night, to sell more alcohol relative to the amount of food that they sell, and to allow craft breweries to sell directly to stores and restaurants without going through a distributor). I am thrilled to see the mission of the Nighttime Economy Task Force grow as the Maryland Comptroller has now proposed reforming the statewide laws that are rigged against local alcohol production.

In 2015, at my request, the council president created an Ad Hoc Committee on Liquor Reform, which I chaired. That committee investigated reports that the county's DLC warehouse was poorly run and hampering local restaurants and beer/wine stores. As a result of my oversight work, the entire senior management of the Department was replaced, and the department is now run more efficiently and effectively. In 2018, for the first time, private beer and wine stores will also be granted licenses to sell spirits, a first since prohibition.

But I am most proud of my success in fostering a local brewery scene. From the initial law enabling breweries to bypass a middleman distributor (and analogous laws for distillers), to zoning changes and economic development incentives, under my leadership the county has worked diligently with entrepreneurs to create what numerous observers call "the best place in the region" to open a brewery. Just visit our new breweries including Denizens, Seven Locks, Waredaca, Brookeville Beer Farm, the soon to open AstroLab, True Respite, and Parallel World to get a taste of all the changes we have made.

While I am continuing my work promoting our local wineries, distilleries and breweries, the next major reform that we need from a consumer standpoint is for the State legislature to grant licenses to our grocery stores to sell beer and wine.

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