

# ELECTION YEAR ALERT

NOW IS THE TIME TO FOCUS ON DEFENDING YOUR LIVELIHOOD

BY PAUL SANTELLE



## State Election Years are Always Challenging for Our Industry!

If the 2016 Presidential election was an indicator of what's in store for Jersey in 2017, everyone better buckle-up and brace for impact! Our entire State Legislature is up for re-election, including our Governorship, and there are a few controversial "evergreen" bills that we will be watching very closely. Evergreen bills are designed to put two conflicting well-funded forces on a collision course during an election cycle. We know all too well that someone has to pay for our elections and that means they will want something in return.

New Jersey is a PAY-TO-PLAY State, which means when it comes to funding elections and candidates, anything and everything is possible. I can tell you firsthand that if we do not all DO OUR PART to protect and defend our livelihoods—then they will become part of someone else's livelihood! Plain and simple, there are interstate big box chain stores, clubs, grocery stores, convenience stores, drugstores that have all succeeded in other states at buying their way into our industry at the expense of independent licensees.

In recent years, license laws have changed in several states, including a few very close to our borders, and there is little doubt in my mind that those same resources will be put to work this year. Their goal will be to challenge the integrity of one of the most exemplary

alcohol distribution systems in our country. The Garden State has a well-balanced regulated system that serves the general welfare as well as the public safety of our citizens while simultaneously delivering the maximum ROI for state coffers with respect to taxation.

Our system also fosters small business ownership opportunity as well as dedicated jobs that are primarily doing one thing—wholesaling and retailing alcoholic beverages!

## Get Connected Join the NJLSA & ABL

When the curtain closes on the upcoming Super Bowl, another gridiron season will be over, and we invite you to get off the sidelines and support your industry with the same passion and enthusiasm that you use to support your favorite football team! If you are a retailer, you are competitive by nature and know the importance of a level playing field.

The NJLSA is continually building our rank and file and looking for new retailers to step up and serve on our Executive Board. We are also seeking out retailers in key legislative districts to step up and become more active with your State elected officials. We are in the process of contacting ALL RETAILERS in key legislative districts and offering them our full support to insure that YOUR VOICE is being heard by your State Legislators.

If you are a retail license who is a member of the NJLSA or perhaps a licensee who would like to join the NJLSA, please reach out to Diane Weiss, NJLSA Membership Coordinator at DianeNJLSA@gmail.com, or call her at our Trenton office (609) 396-1980.

**GET CONNECTED TO YOUR INDUSTRY AT NJLSA.com**

## REGISTRATION OPEN FOR 15<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ABL CONFERENCE IN LAS VEGAS!

The American Beverage Licenses will host their annual meeting in Nevada from Sunday, March 26<sup>th</sup> thru Tuesday, March 28<sup>th</sup> at the Monte Carlo Resort & Casino. This event will be tied to the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Las Vegas Bar & Nightclub show running from March 27<sup>th</sup> thru 29<sup>th</sup> at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

The 2017 annual meeting will mark ABL's 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary and bring together beer, wine and spirit retailers from across the country—as well as representatives from the three tiers of the beverage alcohol industry. Tito Beveridge will be the recipient of the prestigious ABL Top Shelf Award, so you know you'll be in good company for a great time!

Additional information—including registration and room rates, schedules and social events—is now available at [ablusa.org](http://ablusa.org).

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206 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608  
Phone (609) 396-1980

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### IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER PLEASE MARK YOU CALENDARS!

**JUNE 20<sup>th</sup>**  
NJLSA-PAC ANNUAL GOLF OUTING  
Forsgate Country Club, Monroe

**OCTOBER 25<sup>th</sup>**  
NJLSA ANNUAL HOLIDAY TRADE SHOW  
New Jersey Convention & Expo Center at  
Raritan Center, Edison