

# **THE STATS GROUP**

**CT PUBLIC OPINION POLL**

**WINE SALES IN GROCERY STORES**

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# Introduction

This report presents the findings from a public opinion poll of Connecticut residents on the topic of wine sales in Connecticut's traditional grocery stores. Currently beer is allowed to be sold in grocery stores, but not wine. Most states allow for wine sales in grocery stores, and there is a proposal before the Connecticut state legislature to allow for wine sales in the state's grocery stores. The purpose of the poll reported here was to explore public opinion about extending the sale of beer to also include the sale of wine in the state's grocery stores.

The poll was conducted from November 17 to November 21, 2022. A scientific sample of 500 Connecticut adults (age 21 and older) was administered the poll online. Sampling error for the poll is +/- 4% at the 95% level of confidence. The survey was commissioned by the Connecticut Food Association, and conducted by The STATS Group, under the direction of Dr. Kenneth Dautrich. The design of the poll, the questions asked, and the results reported herein were prepared under the direction of Dr. Dautrich.

## Support for Proposal to Sell Wine in Grocery Stores

Public support for a new state law allowing for the sale of wine in traditional grocery stores is very strong. As seen in Table 1, fully 84% of Connecticut residents say they approve of a proposal to allow wine sales in these stores. This represents a 12 percentage point increase in support for supermarket wine sales over the past 5 years when 72% approved of such a proposal. In the current survey, only 16% disapprove of the sale of wine in traditional grocery stores.

Overwhelmingly strong support for the sale of wine in grocery stores cuts across all key demographic subgroups in the Connecticut general public. Those under 40 (82%), 40 to 64 (85%), and 65+ (83%) all support the proposal, as do both men (82%) and women (85%). White (86%), Hispanic (75%) and black (81%) respondents all endorse the proposal for wine sales by strong margins.

The proposal for wine sales in traditional grocery stores cuts across partisan lines as well. 86% of Democrats and 77% of Republicans in Connecticut approve of this proposal as do 87% of Independents. Also, while 89% of wine drinkers approval of the proposal, fully 80% of those who have not had a glass of wine in the past few weeks also approve of it.

The poll reminded respondents that the sale of beer in grocery stores was already legal in Connecticut and then asked them if that made them any more likely to support the sale of wine. More than half (52%) said that this made them much more likely to support wine sales in grocery stores and another 32% said it made them somewhat more likely to support it.

## Arguments in Favor of Grocery Store Wine Sales

The poll presented a number of arguments that have been made favoring the sale of wine in Connecticut's grocery stores. For each argument, respondents were asked if it was a very convincing, somewhat convincing or not a convincing argument. The findings are shown in Table 2.

The most convincing arguments favoring wine sales relate to making the rules for wine sales in Connecticut similar to the rules in other states. For example, 62% say that the following is a very convincing argument: "In 42 of the 50 states grocery stores are allowed to sell wine. If Connecticut approves the sale of wine, it would simply be implementing a program that is working well in many states." Also, 59% say it is very convincing that "Most other New England states including New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont and Massachusetts already allow for the sale of wine in supermarkets."

Convenience also is a good argument. 57% say this is very convincing: "Allowing traditional grocery stores to sell wine would provide Connecticut consumers with much greater convenience." Also, 48% say this is very convincing: "Shopping will become easier when you can simply add wine to your grocery store list."

While not majorities, the following arguments are very convincing to a sizeable number of residents:

- If wine is allowed to be sold in traditional grocery stores, that will give local wineries an opportunity to better advertise their homegrown wines. (42%)
- Traditional grocery stores sell food items, so if I can buy food there I can also purchase wine. (36%)
- People who support selling wine in Connecticut's traditional grocery stores say that it will create over 100 new jobs and generate 5 million in new tax revenues. (34%)

Fewer than 1-in-5 say the following are very convincing arguments:

- Traditional grocery stores are generally safer places to shop, so allowing wine sales will make wine purchasing safer. (18%)
- People who support selling wine in traditional grocery stores say that this will have no impact on the problem of underage drinking because beer and hard liquor are the choice of underage drinkers, not wine. (18%)
- Traditional grocery stores would do a better job of enforcing state liquor laws than local liquor stores (16%)

# Arguments Opposing Grocery Store Wine Sales

## Arguments Opposing Grocery Store Wine Sales

The poll also presented a number of arguments that have been made opposing the sale of wine in Connecticut's grocery stores. For each argument, respondents were asked if it was a very convincing, somewhat convincing or not a convincing argument. The findings are shown in Table 3.

Generally, the opposition arguments are less convincing than the arguments in favor of wine sales. The most convincing argument in opposition is "Opponents of wine sales in traditional grocery stores say that it is just another example of large corporations driving small businesses such as local liquor stores out of business." However, only 26% say this is a very convincing argument.

The remaining opposition arguments are not very convincing to most residents:

- Opponents of wine sales in traditional grocery stores say that it will only be a matter of time before hard liquor is also sold in those stores. (13%)
- Some people say that selling wine in traditional grocery stores will worsen the problem of drunk driving. (10%)
- Some people say that selling wine in traditional grocery stores will worsen the problem of underage drinking. (8%)

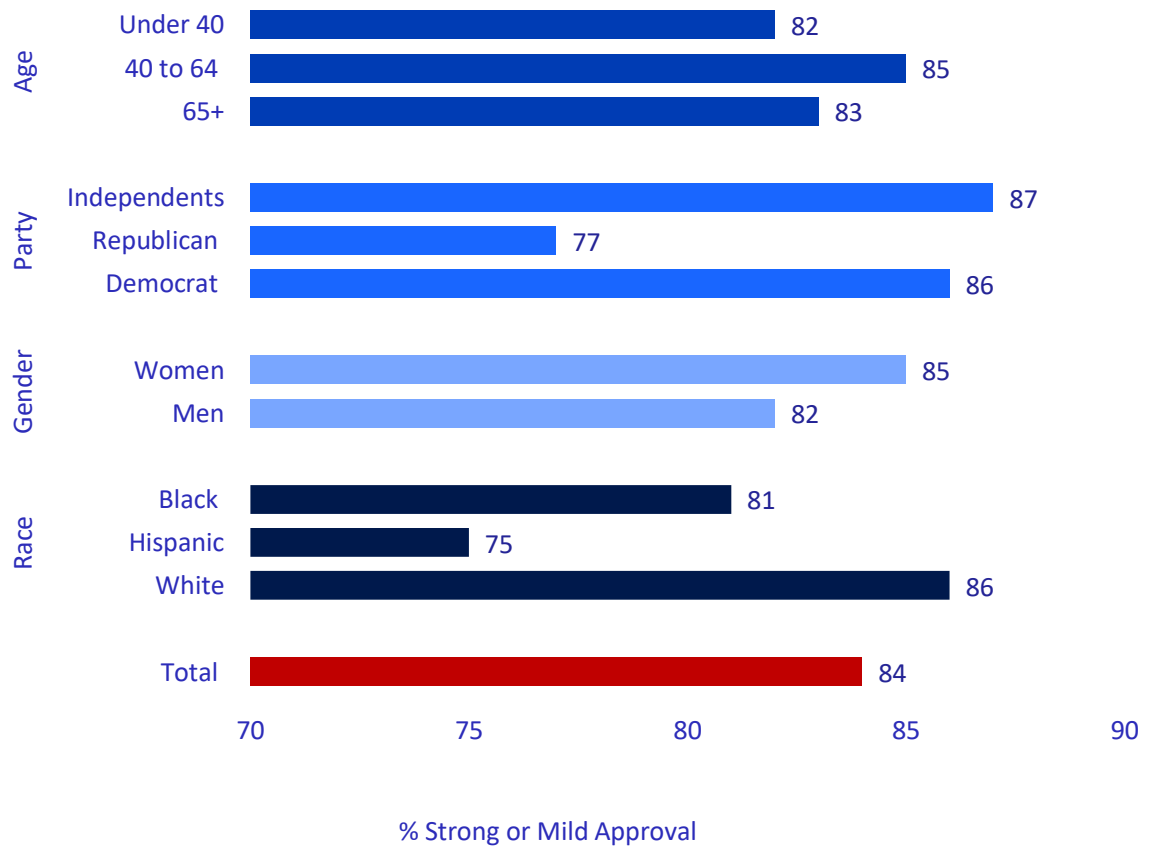
## Pre-exposure vs Post-Exposure Support

After the pro/con arguments were presented to respondents, they were once again asked if they approve or disapprove of the proposal for traditional grocery stores to be allowed to sell wine. Sometimes hearing the arguments may change overall opinions about the issue. The findings are shown in Table 4.

The findings from this second ask endorses the findings from the initial ask: After the arguments were made, fully 87% of Connecticut residents said they approved of the proposal for traditional grocery stores to sell wine. This is 3 percentage points higher than approval in the first ask.

# Support for Proposal to Sell Wine in Grocery Stores

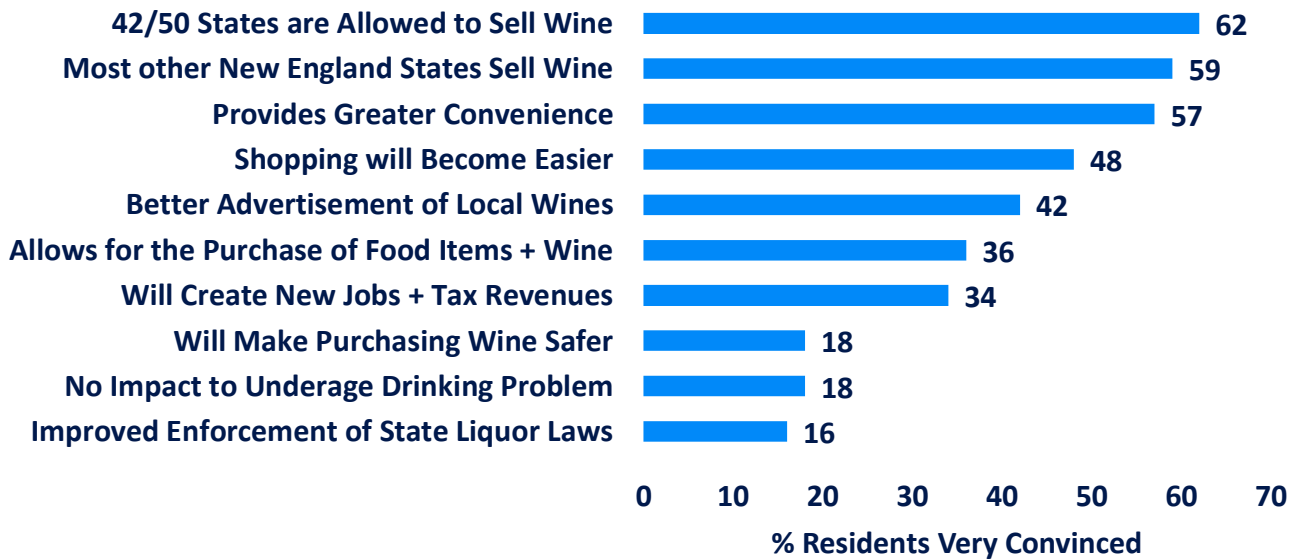
TABLE 1  
Support for Proposal to Sell Wine In Grocery Stores





# Arguments in Support of Selling Wine

## Most Convincing Arguments in Favor of Selling Wine in Grocery Stores



# Opposing Arguments to Selling Wine

**TABLE 3**  
**Opposing Arguments to Selling Wine in Grocery Stores**



# Pre-exposure vs Post-Exposure Support

