

New York State Liquor Authority

Commission to Reform the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law

Commission Meeting #1 Briefing Material

Agenda Topic – 1: “Review of laws against underage consumption of alcohol and the enforcement mechanisms utilized”

Alfred E. Smith Building

80 South Swan Street

Albany NY, 12210

Topic – 1: “Review of laws against underage consumption of alcohol and the enforcement mechanisms utilized”

Statutory Provisions: ABC Law §65-a, ABC Law §65-b, ABC Law §65-c, PENAL Law 260.20

ABC LAW

§ 65-a. Procuring alcoholic beverages for persons under the age of twenty-one years. Any person who misrepresents the age of a person under the age of twenty-one years for the purpose of inducing the sale of any alcoholic beverage, as defined in the alcoholic beverage control law, to such person, is guilty of an offense and upon conviction thereof shall be punished by a fine of not more than two hundred dollars, or by imprisonment for not more than five days, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

ABC LAW

§ 65-b. Offense for one under age of twenty-one years to purchase or attempt to purchase an alcoholic beverage through fraudulent means. 1. As used in this section: (a) "A device capable of deciphering any electronically readable format" or "device" shall mean any commercial device or combination of devices used at a point of sale or entry that is capable of reading the information encoded on the magnetic strip or bar code of a driver's license or non-driver identification card issued by the commissioner of motor vehicles;

(b) "Card holder" means any person presenting a driver's license or non-driver identification card to a licensee, or to the agent or employee of such licensee under this chapter; and

(c) "Transaction scan" means the process involving a device capable of deciphering any electronically readable format by which a licensee, or agent or employee of a licensee under this chapter reviews a driver's license or non-driver identification card presented as a precondition for the purchase of an alcoholic beverage as required by subdivision two of this section or as a precondition for admission to an establishment licensed for the on-premises sale of alcoholic beverages where admission is restricted to persons twenty-one years or older.

2. (a) No person under the age of twenty-one years shall present or offer to any licensee under this chapter, or to the agent or employee of such licensee, any written evidence of age which is false, fraudulent or not actually his own, for the purpose of purchasing or attempting to purchase any alcoholic beverage.

(b) No licensee, or agent or employee of such licensee shall accept as written evidence of age by any such person for the purchase of any alcoholic beverage, any documentation other than: (i) a valid driver's license or non-driver identification card issued by the commissioner of motor vehicles, the federal government, any United States territory, commonwealth or possession, the District of Columbia, a state government within the United States or a provincial government of the dominion of Canada, or (ii) a valid passport issued by the United States government or any other country, or (iii) an identification card issued by the armed forces of the United States. Upon the presentation of such driver's license or non-driver identification card issued by a governmental entity, such licensee or agent or employee thereof may perform a transaction scan as a precondition to the sale of any alcoholic beverage. Nothing in this section shall prohibit a licensee or agent or employee from performing such a transaction scan on any of the

other documents listed in this subdivision if such documents include a bar code or magnetic strip that that may be scanned by a device capable of deciphering any electronically readable format.

(c) In instances where the information deciphered by the transaction scan fails to match the information printed on the driver's license or non-driver identification card presented by the card holder, or if the transaction scan indicates that the information is false or fraudulent, the attempted purchase of the alcoholic beverage shall be denied.

3. A person violating the provisions of paragraph (a) of subdivision two of this section shall be guilty of a violation and shall be sentenced in accordance with the following:

(a) For a first violation, the court shall order payment of a fine of not more than one hundred dollars and/or an appropriate amount of community service not to exceed thirty hours. In addition, the court may order completion of an alcohol awareness program established pursuant to section 19.25 of the mental hygiene law.

(b) For a second violation, the court shall order payment of a fine of not less than fifty dollars nor more than three hundred fifty dollars and/or an appropriate amount of community service not to exceed sixty hours. The court also shall order completion of an alcohol awareness program as referenced in paragraph (a) of this subdivision if such program has not previously been completed by the offender, unless the court determines that attendance at such program is not feasible due to the lack of availability of such program within a reasonably close proximity to the locality in which the offender resides or matriculates, as appropriate.

(c) For third and subsequent violations, the court shall order payment of a fine of not less than fifty dollars nor more than seven hundred fifty dollars and/or an appropriate amount of community service not to exceed ninety hours. The court also shall order that such person submit to an evaluation by an appropriate agency certified or licensed by the office of alcoholism and substance abuse services to determine whether the person suffers from the disease of alcoholism or alcohol abuse, unless the court determines that under the circumstances presented such an evaluation is not necessary, in which case the court shall state on the record the basis for such determination. Payment for such evaluation shall be made by such person. If, based on such evaluation, a need for treatment is indicated, such person may choose to participate in a treatment plan developed by an agency certified or licensed by the office of alcoholism and substance abuse services. If such person elects to participate in recommended treatment, the court shall order that payment of such fine and community service be suspended pending the completion of such treatment.

(d) Evaluation procedures. For purposes of this subdivision, the following shall apply:

(i) The contents of an evaluation pursuant to paragraph (c) of this subdivision shall be used for the sole purpose of determining if such person suffers from the disease of alcoholism or alcohol abuse.

(ii) The agency designated by the court to perform such evaluation shall conduct the evaluation and return the results to the court within thirty days, subject to any state or federal confidentiality law, rule or regulation governing the confidentiality of alcohol and substance abuse treatment records.

(iii) The office of alcoholism and substance abuse services shall make available to each supreme court law library in this state, or, if no supreme court law library is available in a certain county, to the county court law library of such county, a list of agencies certified to

perform evaluations as required by subdivision (f) of section 19.07 of the mental hygiene law.

(iv) All evaluations required under this subdivision shall be in writing and the person so evaluated or his or her counsel shall receive a copy of such evaluation prior to its use by the court.

(v) A minor evaluated under this subdivision shall have, and shall be informed by the court of, the right to obtain a second opinion regarding his or her need for alcoholism treatment.

4. A person violating the provisions of paragraph (b) of subdivision two of this section shall be guilty of a violation punishable by a fine of not more than one hundred dollars, and/or an appropriate amount of community service not to exceed thirty hours. In addition, the court may order completion of an alcohol training awareness program established pursuant to subdivision twelve of section seventeen of this chapter where such program is located within a reasonably close proximity to the locality in which the offender is employed or resides.

5. No determination of guilt pursuant to this section shall operate as a disqualification of any such person subsequently to hold public office, public employment, or as a forfeiture of any right or privilege or to receive any license granted by public authority; and no such person shall be denominated a criminal by reason of such determination.

6. In addition to the penalties otherwise provided in subdivision three of this section, if a determination is made sustaining a charge of illegally purchasing or attempting to illegally purchase an alcoholic beverage, the court may suspend such person's license to drive a motor vehicle and the privilege of an unlicensed person of obtaining such license, in accordance with the following and for the following periods, if it is found that a driver's license was used for the purpose of such illegal purchase or attempt to illegally purchase; provided, however, that where a person is sentenced pursuant to paragraph (b) or (c) of subdivision three of this section, the court shall impose such license suspension if it is found that a driver's license was used for the purpose of such illegal purchase or attempt to illegally purchase:

(a) For a first violation of paragraph (a) of subdivision two of this section, a three month suspension.

(b) For a second violation of paragraph (a) of subdivision two of this section, a six month suspension.

(c) For a third or subsequent violation of paragraph (a) of subdivision two of this section, a suspension for one year or until the holder reaches the age of twenty-one, whichever is the greater period of time.

Such person may thereafter apply for and be issued a restricted use license in accordance with the provisions of section five hundred thirty of the vehicle and traffic law.

7. (a) In any proceeding pursuant to subdivision one of section sixty-five of this article, it shall be an affirmative defense that such person had produced a driver's license or non-driver identification card apparently issued by a governmental entity, successfully completed the transaction scan, and that the alcoholic beverage had been sold, delivered or given to such person in reasonable reliance upon such identification and transaction scan. In evaluating the applicability of such affirmative defense, the liquor authority shall take into consideration any written policy adopted and implemented by the seller to carry out the provisions of this chapter. Use of a transaction scan shall not excuse any licensee under this chapter, or agent or employee of such licensee, from the exercise of reasonable diligence otherwise required by this section. Notwithstanding the above provisions, any such

affirmative defense shall not be applicable in any other civil or criminal proceeding, or in any other forum.

(b) A licensee or agent or employee of a licensee may electronically or mechanically record and maintain only the information from a transaction scan necessary to effectuate the purposes of this section. Such information shall be limited to the following: (i) name, (ii) date of birth, (iii) driver's license or non-driver identification number, and (iv) expiration date. The liquor authority and the state commissioner of motor vehicles shall jointly promulgate any regulation necessary to govern the recording and maintenance of these records by a licensee under this chapter. The liquor authority and the commissioner of health shall jointly promulgate any regulations necessary to ensure quality control in the use of transaction scan devices.

8. A licensee or agent or employee of such licensee shall only use the information recorded and maintained through the use of such devices for the purposes contained in paragraph (a) of subdivision seven of this section, and shall only use such devices for the purposes contained in subdivision two of this section. No licensee or agent or employee of a licensee shall resell or disseminate the information recorded during such scan to any third person. Such prohibited resale or dissemination includes, but is not limited to, any advertising, marketing or promotional activities. Notwithstanding the restrictions imposed by this subdivision, such records may be released pursuant to a court ordered subpoena or pursuant to any other statute that specifically authorizes the release of such information. Each violation of this subdivision shall be punishable by a civil penalty of not more than one thousand dollars.

ABC LAW

§ 65-c. Unlawful possession of an alcoholic beverage with the intent to consume by persons under the age of twenty-one years. 1. Except as hereinafter provided, no person under the age of twenty-one years shall possess any alcoholic beverage, as defined in this chapter, with the intent to consume such beverage.

2. A person under the age of twenty-one years may possess any alcoholic beverage with intent to consume if the alcoholic beverage is given:

(a) to a person who is a student in a curriculum licensed or registered by the state education department and the student is required to taste or imbibe alcoholic beverages in on-campus or off-campus courses which are a part of the required curriculum, provided such alcoholic beverages are used only for instructional purposes during class conducted pursuant to such curriculum; or

(b) to the person under twenty-one years of age by that person's parent or guardian.

3. Any person who unlawfully possesses an alcoholic beverage with intent to consume may be summoned before and examined by a court having jurisdiction of that charge; provided, however, that nothing contained herein shall authorize, or be construed to authorize, a peace officer as defined in subdivision thirty-three of section 1.20 of the criminal procedure law or a police officer as defined in subdivision thirty-four of section 1.20 of such law to arrest a person who unlawfully possesses an alcoholic beverage with intent to consume. If a determination is made sustaining such charge the court may impose a fine not exceeding fifty dollars and/or completion of an alcohol awareness program established pursuant to section 19.25 of the mental hygiene law and/or an

appropriate amount of community service not to exceed thirty hours.

4. No such determination shall operate as a disqualification of any such person subsequently to hold public office, public employment, or as a forfeiture of any right or privilege or to receive any license granted by public authority; and no such person shall be denominated a criminal by reason of such determination, nor shall such determination be deemed a conviction.

5. Whenever a peace officer as defined in subdivision thirty-three of section 1.20 of the criminal procedure law or police officer as defined in subdivision thirty-four of section 1.20 of the criminal procedure law shall observe a person under twenty-one years of age openly in possession of an alcoholic beverage as defined in this chapter, with the intent to consume such beverage in violation of this section, said officer may seize the beverage, and shall deliver it to the custody of his or her department.

6. Any alcoholic beverage seized in violation of this section is hereby declared a nuisance. The official to whom the beverage has been delivered shall, no earlier than three days following the return date for initial appearance on the summons, dispose of or destroy the alcoholic beverage seized or cause it to be disposed of or destroyed. Any person claiming ownership of an alcoholic beverage seized under this section may, on the initial return date of the summons or earlier on five days notice to the official or department in possession of the beverage, apply to the court for an order preventing the destruction or disposal of the alcoholic beverage seized and ordering the return of that beverage. The court may order the beverage returned if it is determined that return of the beverage would be in the interest of justice or that the beverage was improperly seized.

PENAL LAW

260.20 Unlawfully dealing with a child in the first degree.

A person is guilty of unlawfully dealing with a child in the first degree when:

1. He knowingly permits a child less than eighteen years old to enter or remain in or upon a place, premises or establishment where sexual activity as defined by article one hundred thirty, two hundred thirty or two hundred sixty-three of this part or activity involving controlled substances as defined by article two hundred twenty of this part is maintained or conducted, and he knows or has reason to know that such activity is being maintained or conducted; or

2. He gives or sells or causes to be given or sold any alcoholic beverage, as defined by section three of the alcoholic beverage control law, to a person less than twenty-one years old; except that this subdivision does not apply to the parent or guardian of such a person or to a person who gives or causes to be given any such alcoholic beverage to a person under the age of twenty-one years, who is a student in a curriculum licensed or registered by the state education department, where the tasting or imbibing of alcoholic beverages is required in courses that are part of the required curriculum, provided such alcoholic beverages are given only for instructional purposes during classes conducted pursuant to such curriculum.

It is no defense to a prosecution pursuant to subdivision two of this section that the child acted as the agent or representative of another person or that the defendant dealt with the child as such.

It is an affirmative defense to a prosecution pursuant to subdivision two of this section that the defendant who sold, caused to be sold or

attempted to sell such alcoholic beverage to a person less than twenty-one years old, had not been, at the time of such sale or attempted sale, convicted of a violation of this section or section 260.21 of this article within the preceding five years, and such defendant, subsequent to the commencement of the present prosecution, has completed an alcohol training awareness program established pursuant to subdivision twelve of section seventeen of the alcoholic beverage control law. A defendant otherwise qualifying pursuant to this paragraph may request and shall be afforded a reasonable adjournment of the proceedings to enable him or her to complete such alcohol training awareness program.

Unlawfully dealing with a child in the first degree is a class A misdemeanor.

Underage Drinking Initiative (UDI)

The SLA's Enforcement Bureau is responsible for investigating violations of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law (ABCL), rules and regulations relating to the manufacturing, wholesale, retail, transportation, and storage of alcoholic beverages. The Enforcement Bureau works with law enforcement agencies across the state, performs disclosed and undisclosed investigations, and conducts trainings for police departments.

Combating underage sales continues to be a top priority for the SLA, as a sale to a minor is considered one of the most serious violations of the ABC Law. The SLA and law enforcement agencies routinely conduct operations throughout the State to monitor compliance with the law, which include SLA investigators or police officers observing sales in a licensed establishment in addition to the use of underage agents.

In a typical year, SLA investigators make thousands of undisclosed visits to licensed premises to ensure licensees are following the law. These include SLA operations targeting repeat offenders, establishments with prior sales to minors, targeted investigations based on complaints, in addition to general compliance checks covering specific geographical areas. During these initiatives, the SLA utilizes underage agents that work under the direct supervision of SLA Beverage Control Investigators.

The SLA also conducts joint details with the New York State Police (NYSP), the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and local law enforcement agencies. Additionally, the SLA receives referrals from local law enforcement agencies regarding sales to minors; when a police referral is received, it is forwarded to the SLA's Counsel's Office for review. Based on the facts alleged and the sufficiency of the evidence, Counsel's Office will either: bring a disciplinary proceeding; refer the matter to the Enforcement Bureau for further investigation; or close the case.

Year	SLA Initiatives	Premises Visited During SLA Initiatives	Sales From SLA Initiatives	Charges (SLA Initiatives & Referrals)
2022 (to date)	6	108	15	112
2021	15	173	44	209
2020	N/A	N/A	N/A	226
2019	165	2253	448	1157
2018	127	1734	440	1090
2017	120	1620	393	1139
2016	68	847	188	895

The chart above provides data on UDI operations over the past six years. Using 2019 to illustrate the SLA's enforcement of underage drinking laws in a typical year (as Enforcement priorities shifted in 2020 and 2021 to concentrate on Covid related violations) the SLA brought a total of 1,157 charges against licensees for selling alcohol to minors. This included 448 charges for sale to minor obtained through SLA initiatives, in addition to 709 charges resulting from referrals from state and local police departments.

Licensees charged by the SLA with underage sales face civil penalties of up to \$10,000 per violation, with fines starting from \$2,500 to \$4,000 for a first-time offense. Repeat offenders also face possible suspension, cancellations, or revocation of their licenses. In addition, employees or licensees who sell to