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**Statement from John Livengood, Indiana Association of Beverage Retailers**

There is nothing new about today's announcement by the mislabeled Alliance of Responsible Alcohol Retailers (ARAR). This legislative initiative by the big box chain stores and gas stations delivered during the holidays is like re-gifting a four-year-old fruitcake; it's something that's been around for years and nobody wants it. The legislature has looked at and rejected similar initiatives in the past, and it's a path down which no one wants to go. This is the 'same-old, same-old.'

"Hoosiers for Beverage Choice" is not a grassroots campaign, but a push by out-of-state chain stores to increase their revenues at the expense of locally owned small businesses that offer Hoosiers real choice in outstanding, competitively priced local, national and international products. The group's online petition last year only netted interest from 53,000 people - less than 1 percent of the state's population. There has been no verification that those who signed their online petition are Indiana residents of legal drinking age.

Our scientific polling of Hoosier voters shows overwhelming support for Indiana's regulation of alcohol sales and opposition to the kind of deregulated system that would result from changes proposed by Walmart, Costco and Kroger.

It's time for these national chains to stop asking the legislature to help them destroy Hoosier-owned and operated small businesses, putting thousands out of work and eliminating customer convenience and product selection. Most states prohibit big box stores from selling spirits - something they already have in Indiana because of an old loophole in our law. They should be satisfied with what they have and stop greedily asking for the ability to dominate and control the alcohol market in Indiana.