



Consumer Federation of America

May 12, 2021

The Honorable Carolyn Maloney
Chairwoman
House Committee on Oversight and Reform
2308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James Comer
Ranking Member
House Committee on Oversight and Reform
2410 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Maloney and Ranking Member Comer:

On behalf of Consumer Federation of America, I am writing to urge you to oppose the United States Postal Service (USPS) Shipping Equity Act, introduced in the last Congress by Congresswoman Speier as H.R. 2517. We understand the bill will be offered as an amendment during Thursday's markup in the House Committee on Oversight and Reform.

CFA opposes the bill because studies have demonstrated that internet alcohol vendors, and the private delivery companies they now use to ship, have not established adequate protocols to prevent purchases by underage alcohol buyers. In one study, researchers undertook 100 online alcohol purchase attempts with underage alcohol buyers, and almost half (45%)¹ were successfully received. Establishing "equity" for the U.S. Postal Service in this domain would mean increased opportunities for underage drinking, the number one substance use issue facing American youth.

The bill would also undermine state and local regulation of alcoholic beverages. In particular, several states prohibit shipments of alcohol directly to consumers, yet internet alcohol vendors routinely ignore these restrictions, undercutting legitimate businesses and shirking state taxes. Last year, Ohio's attorney general filed suit against several online vendors in an attempt to enforce that state's law.² Were the Postal Service available to internet alcohol vendors, such unscrupulous practices would likely grow.

Congress should not subvert the mission of the U.S. Postal Service by saddling it with a duty to deliver intoxicants. The committee should instead focus on how to protect consumers, their families, and their communities from the unlawful internet alcohol sales already taking place.

Sincerely,

Thomas Gremillion
Director of Food Policy
Consumer Federation of America

¹ Williams RS, Ribisl KM. Internet Alcohol Sales to Minors. Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med. 2012;166(9):808–813. doi:10.1001/archpediatrics.2012.265

² <https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/July-2020/Yost-Looks-to-Curb-Illegal-Liquor-and-Wine-Shipmen>