



## **Free the Grapes Alabama: Clear the way for direct wine shipments**

*Support Senate Bill 243 for Consumer Choice and Alabama's Economy*

**March 5, 2018—Napa, CA** – Alabama is one of only six states with an archaic ban on winery-to-consumer direct shipments, but that could change with the passage of proposed legislation. Senate Bill 243, sponsored by Senator Bill Holtzclaw (R- 2<sup>nd</sup> District), would allow adult consumers in Alabama to purchase a limited amount of wine directly from wineries licensed by the state to ship. Senate Bill 243 has cleared one hurdle, recently passing the Senate Committee on Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Development. Now, the next step is for the bill to get scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor in the next two weeks.

“Senate Bill 243 will give Alabama’s wine lovers the ability to determine which wines they can enjoy and how they purchase them,” said Jeremy Benson, executive director of Free the Grapes!, the national movement of consumers, wineries and retailers seeking to expand consumer choice in wine with legal, regulated direct to consumer shipments. “The time has come for Alabamians to access the wines they want.”

### **How to Help: Ask Your Legislators to Support Senate Bill 243 Today**

Alabamian wine lovers eager to access the wines they want are asked to visit [www.FreeTheGrapes.org](http://www.FreeTheGrapes.org) and personalize a letter to their legislators. Personalize a letter here:

<http://www.capwiz.com/freegrapes/issues/alert/?alertid=74277626>

Model direct shipping legislation, similar to Senate Bill 243, is working successfully in 44 states and the District of Columbia, which represents nearly 94% of the population. The laws provide additional tax revenues, satisfy consumer demand, and meet regulatory requirements in a dynamic marketplace. Contrary to arguments stating otherwise, removing barriers to winery-to-consumer shipping does not hurt local retailers or beverage wholesalers. On the other hand, regulated wine shipping does boost tax collections, a benefit to the state and local economy.

“Don’t believe the scare tactics presented by opponents,” Benson continued. “No state has rescinded its direct shipping laws based on non-compliance, underage access, or loss of jobs. Senate Bill 243 is a beneficial bill for the state of Alabama and a win for consumer choice.”

### **About Free the Grapes!**

Founded in 1998, Free the Grapes! is a national movement of consumers, wineries and retailers seeking to expand consumer choice in wine with legal, regulated direct shipments. To receive email updates, visit [www.freethegrapes.org](http://www.freethegrapes.org).

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