

Representative:

My name is Frank Pagurko, and I write to you on behalf of the Rio Grande Foundation, an economic policy think tank based in Albuquerque. We work to promote the interests of the people of New Mexico through free market policy.

In the interest of New Mexico small business owners, I strongly urge you to **vote YES** on HB 164, the “New Liquor Dispenser Licenses” bill. This bill allows for a more market-based approach to liquor licenses, which would lower the barrier for new businesses and pass savings on to customers. Liquor licenses in New Mexico are commonly sold for several hundreds of thousands of dollars. This is an egregious sum especially when compared to liquor licenses sold for just a few thousand dollars in our neighboring state of Texas. Restaurants, particularly small and locally owned restaurants like those hardest hit by the pandemic shutdown, operate on slim profit margins in the best of times. A more sensible liquor license market like that outlined in HB 164 would lead to healthier businesses and a more vibrant and business-friendly environment in our state. This bill does not create a simple open market for licenses, but it allows for a gradual expansion in the number of licenses available, gradually bringing the cost down over time. This gradual expansion means that license prices would not bottom out over time like some fear.

For New Mexico businesses and customers, please vote yes on HB 164. Thank you.



Frank Pagurko III