

# Colorado: Showdown looms over Colorado liquor laws

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Liquor store workers and owners will rally on the steps of the State Capitol Wednesday to fight two bills seeking to change liquor laws in favor of grocery and convenience stores.

One, which will be heard Wednesday afternoon, would allow convenience stores and 7-11's to sell full-strength beer. Those stores argue that the advent of Sunday liquor sales has hurt their business selling 3:2 beer, which had been the only beer available on Sundays until that law was changed.

The second bill, yet to be scheduled for a hearing, would allow grocery stores within a thousand feet of a neighboring liquor store to buy the smaller liquor store's license and sell their products: full-strength beer, wine and liquor.

"The grocery store would buy the license of the local liquor store if it's within a short distance," said Rep. Jack Pommer, D-Boulder, one of the sponsors of House Bill 1279. "We're trying to find a balance, a win-win situation for both grocery and liquor stores. The liquor store owners benefit because they get to sell the business. And the grocery store gets to sell the liquor."

But the liquor industry is lobbying hard against the bill and focusing on the potential job losses and overall negative economic impact these bills could have on the state's 1600 liquor stores.