



AT THE BAR WITH BOWDITCH

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Changes Brewing? Massachusetts Considers Revamping Nearly Century-old Alcohol Laws

BY ROBERT G. YOUNG • JANUARY 20, 2017

Originally enacted in the aftermath of prohibition repeal, Massachusetts' alcohol laws recently [have come under fire](#) for being out of sync with modern times. While prior legislative efforts to reform aspects of the Commonwealth's alcohol laws have run out of steam prior to final passage, state Treasurer Deborah Goldberg recently created a new task force to review the state's alcohol laws on a holistic basis and suggest modifications to bring them into the modern era.

[According to press reports](#), Ms. Goldberg will appoint four members of the task force, and Governor Baker, House Speaker Robert DeLeo and Senate President Stanley Rosenberg each will appoint one. To date, five of the seven members have been appointed; a Chairperson to be appointed by Ms. Goldberg and an appointee from Governor Baker have not yet been announced. Once fully formed, the task force will have a blank slate to review the state's alcohol law regime and may consider issues as wide-ranging as the Commonwealth's franchise law, hours of operation for package stores, and municipality liquor licensing limits.

While it is too soon to predict what, if any, suggested changes actually will become law, the work of the task force certainly bears watching.