

State Advisory Board Soon To Recommend Liquor Law Changes

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Advocates for strong liquor control laws say they are upset they were left out of meetings of an advisory board preparing to make recommendations on changes to alcohol rules that will eventually go to Governor Rick Snyder.

The advocates say their concern is two-fold; first that they were left out of the advisory board meetings, and also over what they believe some of the recommendations to Governor Snyder could be. They are worried the Liquor Control Advisory Rules Committee will recommend allowing alcohol to be sold closer to churches and schools, and allowing more liquor licenses.

Micki Fuhrman, with the Michigan Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking, says when a community is saturated with liquor stores it has a big impact on kids.

"It just makes it more visible, and if it's more visible it's acceptable," Fuhrman says. "And so you change the norms from 'it's not okay to drink as an underage person' to 'everybody's doing it, so what does it matter?'"

Andy Deloney, who chairs the Michigan Liquor Control Commission, says the advisory board does not choose which recommendations become laws.

"The governor wanted these committees to be created and to do this work, and it's up to him to decide when and how and which recommendations he wants to go along with," he says.

Members of the advisory board say the group is wrapping up work, and it will be up to the governor to choose which recommendations he likes.