[STORE LETTERHEAD]

[DATE]

The Honorable [FIRST NAME][LAST NAME]

[ADDRESS]

[CITY][STATE][ZIP]

Dear Representative/Senator [LAST NAME]:

As a bookseller in [CITY], I am writing to express my disappointment with Governor Baker’s economic development bill. The bill was filed without the Blue Law reform that had been requested by the Retailers Association of Massachusetts on behalf of Massachusetts retailers. And, as if to add insult to injury, the development bill stressed that online sellers like Amazon do not need to adhere to the Blue Law requirements. It is high time that the discriminatory Sunday Blue Law be repealed. I urge you to oppose the governor’s bill unless a repeal of the Sunday Blue Law is added.

By leaving out a repeal of the Blue Law, the governor’s economic development bill will do the opposite as it is intended. The costly and anti-competitive Sunday premium pay requirement hurts local employers like me, while benefiting out-of-state and new technology competitors.

On 58 important sales days a year (52 Sundays and 6 holidays), I must pay time and a half under our Blue Laws. Only retailers are targeted by the costly requirement, and now the governor wants to make sure that online sellers are exempt from the law. Compounding matters, Amazon has received millions of taxpayer dollars to locate its warehouses in the state -- meaning that my tax dollars are helping my biggest competitor -- so it should be no surprise as to why I strongly oppose the proposed economic development bill.

In 2014, Amazon sold $1,155.8 million worth of retail goods statewide, which is the equivalent of 812 retail storefronts that might have paid $19.5 million in property taxes. That translate to a total of more than $19.5 million in revenue lost to state and local governments, according to a recently released study by Civic Economics. Even counting all the jobs in Amazon warehouses in the Commonwealth, ***Amazon sales produced a net loss of 5,683 retail jobs in Massachusetts***. That our state leaders would continue to put the true jobs creators, Main Street retailers, at significant disadvantage to a corporate giant like Amazon, ***when it losing jobs here***, not only hurts business like my own, but the communities in which we reside and the residents who call them home.

This blatant favoritism has to stop. Please amend the Blue Law so that retailers can compete against online giants on a somewhat level playing field. (I say “somewhat” because, so long as the Commonwealth subsidizes out of state corporations like Amazon, the playing field will never be truly level.)

Sincerely,

[NAME/STORE/ADDRESS]