



In support of 1652 – Repeal of the NYC Cabaret Law

Good morning. My name is Kevin Dugan and I am the Government Affairs Director for the New York State Restaurant Association, a trade group that represents food and beverage establishments both in New York City and throughout New York State. The Association is the largest hospitality trade association in the State of New York and it has advocated on behalf of its members for more than 80 years. Our members represent one of the largest constituencies regulated by the City as nearly every agency regulates restaurants in one aspect or another.

Restaurants employ hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers and are a backbone of the tourism trade here in New York City. To ensure the continued viability of the restaurant and hospitality industry, New York City must have sensible and reasonable regulations that protect consumers and the restaurants that serve them.

The goal of every small business in this City is survival. With the cost of labor and rent on the rise it is getting more difficult for restaurants to navigate the difficult business climate here in New York. Attracting customers is paramount and the Association believes that the amount of red tape that has been associated with obtaining a cabaret license has closed off revenue streams to existing bars and restaurants. This is a real concern to the industry as every dollar is needed to ensure continued existence.

For far too long bars and restaurants who have wanted to feature dancing haven't been able to unless they have jumped through a number of bureaucratic hoops and paid hundreds of dollars in fees. Many patrons are looking for opportunities to dance and express themselves, we should be encouraging this type of behavior. By allowing establishments to more easily provide this entertainment we are allowing them to better serve their customers wants and also make additional revenue; a true win-win for everyone.

It's preposterous that the "City that never Sleeps" has an outdated law on its books that turns our city, as Councilman Espinal has said before, into the town from Footloose. The original law was passed in 1926 to target jazz clubs in Harlem. It is far past the time where this law should be done away with and we need to modernize this aspect of the City's administrative code. With the additions Councilman Espinal has made, the safety of the patrons will remain a top priority and this will simply allow for more establishments to offer exciting entertainment.

The restaurant industry in New York is one of the most highly regulated industries in the entire

City. We need to make it easier for the industry has a whole to make ends meet. By repealing this outdated law we will allow our restaurants and bars to attract new customers without compromising on safety. Every dollar is vitally important to a restaurant's survival and we should be exploring every avenue that allows them to make more of them.

In conclusion, the New York State Restaurant Association supports Int. 1562 and urges the council to pass this bill. We look forward to working with the Council on further legislation that helps protect the restaurant and hospitality industry in the City of New York.

Respectfully Submitted,

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