



Legislation Text

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Int. No. 1281-A

By Council Members Torres, Espinal, Powers, Deutsch, Cumbo, Lander, Brannan, Dromm, Reynoso, Rivera, Constantinides, Kallos, Levine, Ayala, Rosenthal, Moya, Rose, Cornegy, Koslowitz, Lancman, Levin, Cohen, Chin, Vallone, Barron, Maisel and The Public Advocate (Mr. Williams)

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to prohibiting food stores and retail establishments from refusing to accept payment in cash

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Chapter 5 of title 20 of the administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding a new subchapter 21 to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER 21

CASHLESS ESTABLISHMENTS PROHIBITED

§ 20-840 Cashless establishments prohibited. a. Definitions. For purposes of this subchapter, the following terms have the following meanings:

Cash. The term “cash” means United States coins and currency, including federal reserve notes. Cash does not include foreign currency; any paper instrument other than a federal reserve note, including, but not limited to, any check, bond, or promissory note; or any foreign metal coin.

Consumer commodity. The term “consumer commodity” means any article, good, merchandise, product or commodity of any kind or class produced, distributed or offered for retail sale for consumption by individuals, or for personal, household or family purposes.

Food store. The term “food store” means an establishment which gives or offers for sale food or beverages to the public for consumption or use on or off the premises, or on or off a pushcart, stand or vehicle.

Retail establishment. The term “retail establishment” means an establishment wherein consumer

commodities are sold, displayed or offered for sale, or where services are provided to consumers at retail. This definition does not include banks or trust companies as those terms are defined in section 2 of article 1 of the banking law.

b. It shall be unlawful for a food store or a retail establishment to refuse to accept payment in cash from consumers, provided that such food store or retail establishment may refuse to accept payment:

1. In cash bills denominated above \$20; or

2. In cash for any telephone, mail, or internet-based transaction, unless the payment for such transaction takes place on the premises of such food store or retail establishment.

c. No food store or retail establishment shall charge a higher price for the same consumer commodity to a consumer who pays in cash than to a consumer who pays for such commodity through a cash-less transaction.

d. A food store or retail establishment that violates this section is liable for a civil penalty of not more than \$1000 for the first violation and a civil penalty of not more than \$1500 for each subsequent violation.

e. 1. This subchapter shall not apply to a food store or retail establishment that provides a device on premises that converts cash, without charging a fee or requiring a minimum deposit amount greater than one dollar, into a prepaid card that allows a consumer to complete a transaction at such food store or retail establishment.

2. Upon request, such device shall provide each consumer with a receipt indicating the amount of cash such consumer deposited onto the prepaid card.

3. Cash deposits onto such a prepaid card shall not be subject to an expiration date and there shall be no limit on the number of transactions that may be completed on such prepaid card.

4. In the event that such device malfunctions, the food store or retail establishment where such device is located shall accept payment in cash from consumers throughout the time period in which such device does not function in accordance with the standards set forth in this subchapter. Such food store or retail establishment shall place a conspicuous sign on or immediately adjacent to such device indicating that such food store or

retail establishment is required by law to accept cash if such device malfunctions, and that consumers may report any violation to 311. The department may establish by rule additional requirements relating to such signs and the display of such signs.

§ 2. This local law takes effect 270 days after it becomes law, except that the department of consumer affairs may take such measures as are necessary for the implementation of this local law, including the promulgation of rules, before such date.

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