



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

CHRISTINA HENDERSON
Councilmember, At-Large
Chairperson, Committee on Health

Committee Member
Facilities
Human Services
Transportation and the Environment

Statement of Introduction
Entertainment Establishment Employee Safety Amendment Act of 2025
January 17, 2025

Today, I am introducing the Entertainment Establishment Employee Safety Amendment Act of 2025, along with Councilmembers Brooke Pinto and Matthew Frumin. This legislation would permit a retail establishment with a valid on-premises Class C or Class D retailer license or a restaurant location that operates 24 hours a day or operates at 3:00 am at least 2 days a week to refuse cash as a form of payment, provided that such establishments display written, conspicuous notice to the public on the door of the establishment or menu that cash payments are not accepted. Class C license holders are establishments such as restaurants, hotels, taverns, nightclubs, and other entertainment venues, allowing them to serve spirits, beer, and wine. Class D licenses cover the same establishments but restrict service to beer and wine only.

The Cashless Retailers Prohibition Act, introduced in 2018, passed in 2020, and funded in the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Support Act, prohibits retail establishments from discriminating against cash as a form of payment. However, due to public safety concerns, a provision was included in the Secure DC Omnibus Amendment Act of 2024 to temporarily pause implementation of this law. This pause was set to expire on January 1, 2025. In December 2024, the Council approved emergency and temporary legislation that carves out specific businesses from the requirements of the Cashless Retailers Prohibition Act. That emergency and temporary legislation is identical to the measure I am introducing today.

Many businesses, particularly those that sell alcohol, are concerned for their employees' safety and have shared multiple stories about successful and attempted robberies and burglaries. Businesses that are cashless are not at risk of robbery in the same way as businesses with cash on hand. When all businesses were permitted to refuse cash as a form of payment, the primary reason for this choice was to reduce the risk of robbery and burglary, followed by the availability of non-cash payment options and reducing the risk of internal theft.

Additionally, consumer use of contactless payment options has surged dramatically since the initial introduction of the Cashless Retailers Prohibition Act of 2018. In 2018, there were 2.9 billion contactless transactions in the United States; by 2023, that number had increased more than sixfold, reaching 17.9 billion. The Federal Reserve's 2023 Diary of Consumer Payment Choice revealed that cash use had dropped to a near-record low in 2023, with consumers using cash 75% less frequently than credit and debit cards. Additionally, cash was the least common payment method for services at restaurants and bars in 2023.



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The changes proposed by this measure are offered recognizing (1) changes in consumer use of payment forms post-pandemic, (2) unbanked individuals' reliance on cash as a form of payment to obtain essential goods and services, and (3) the safety concerns of certain businesses.

Under this legislation, eligible businesses would have the ability to refuse cash as a form of payment—not all businesses will choose to do so. This legislation will give Class C and D alcohol license holders the option to operate as cashless establishments if they feel it is necessary for the safety of their employees and patrons.

In the coming months, I will work with Council colleagues and community partners to find a permanent solution that balances the needs of our residents, businesses, and entertainment establishment staff.

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Councilmember Brooke Pinto



Councilmember Christina Henderson



Councilmember Matthew Frumin

A BILL

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To amend Section 28-5404 of the District of Columbia Official Code to allow retail establishments with a valid on-premises Class C and Class D retailer license to refuse cash as a form of payment.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this act may be cited as the “Entertainment Establishment Employee Safety Amendment Act of 2025.”

Sec. 2. Section 28-5404 of the District of Columbia Official Code is amended as follows:

(a) Paragraph (3)(C) is amended by striking the phrase “; or” and inserting a semicolon in its place.

(b) Paragraph (4) is amended by striking the period and inserting the phrase “; or” in its place.

(c) A new paragraph (5) is added to read as follows:

“(5) Provided that written, conspicuous notice to the public is displayed on the door of the establishment or menu that cash payments are not accepted, to:

35 “(A) A retail establishment with a valid on-premises Class C or Class D
36 retailer license; or

37 “(B) A restaurant location, as that term is defined in § 25-101(43), that
38 operates:

39 “(i) 24 hours a day; or

40 “(ii) At 3:00 am at least 2 days a week.”.

41 Sec. 3. Fiscal impact statement.

42 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal
43 impact statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975,
44 approved October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

45 Sec. 4. Effective date.

46 This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the
47 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto) and a 30-day period of congressional review
48 as provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December
49 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)).