



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 501

Resolution calling on the State Liquor Authority (SLA) to ban the practice and licensure of applicants proposing “bottle service” in the state of New York and to strengthen enforcement of the laws regarding alcohol consumption, especially in relation to service to minors and, if the SLA does not take such action, calling on the New York State Legislature to pass legislation banning “bottle service.”

By Council Members Katz, Brewer, Comrie, Gerson, James, Palma, Recchia Jr., Seabrook, Weprin, Mark-Viverito, Foster and Gentile

Whereas, A vibrant, exciting nightlife is one of New York City’s signature attributes, setting it apart from other municipalities and unquestionably contributing to New York’s prominence among cities of the world; and

Whereas, One of the hallmarks of the City’s nightlife experience is the nightclub, a venue in which revelers may come together to socialize, drink, dance, or eat; and

Whereas, Recent years have seen an explosion of nightclubs offering “bottle service,” in which customers are required to purchase one or more expensive bottles of hard liquor, initially required to obtain access to an exclusive “VIP” lounge and now, with increasing regularity, simply to be permitted to enter the premises; and

Whereas, Bottle service is not the first entrance requirement proposed by nightlife establishments, as cover charges and drink purchase minimums are standard practices in the industry; and

Whereas, In contrast to cover charges and drink purchase minimums, this new iteration in nightlife entry protocol drastically increases patrons’ incentive to drink intemperately and promotes dangerous levels of drunkenness; and

Whereas, A recent spate of violent crime associated with excessive alcohol consumption has brought the

matter of rampant drinking to the forefront of public concern, cultivating a growing concern that while nightlife is integral to New York City's social and economic development, it cannot be allowed to abet violence or encourage essentially self-destructive alcohol consumption; and

Whereas, According to its 2003/2004 Annual Report, the New York State Liquor Authority (SLA) collected \$5.8 million in penalties; and

Whereas, Section 17(2) of the New York State Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Law empowers the New York State Liquor Authority (SLA) to issue, refuse to issue, limit, or "prohibit the acceptance of applications for such class or classes of licenses which have been so limited;" and

Whereas, Section 17(13) of the ABC Law further requires the SLA to report biennially on its consideration of quality of life concerns in the issuance of liquor licenses, on possible improvements to enforcement methodologies, on the appropriate distribution of field enforcement personnel, and, under Section 17(8-a), requires an annual "evaluation of the effectiveness of the prohibition on the sale of alcohol to persons under the age of twenty-one;" and

Whereas, So empowered and required, the SLA's responsibility to promote a socially responsible and effectively regulated atmosphere for those of-age New Yorkers who choose to consume alcohol is an increasingly critical mandate in the wake of the aforementioned criminal activity; now, therefore, be it

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