City of Baltimore

City Council
City Hall, Room 408
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL   R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Henry
At the request of: Marylanders for Better Beer & Wine Laws, c/o Adam Borden, President
Address: 4315 Underwood Road, Baltimore, MD 21218
Telephone:443-570-8102

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Request for State Legislation - Repeal Corkage Ban in Maryland

FOR the purpose of respectfully requesting the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2011 Session of the Maryland General Assembly to introduce and obtain passage of legislation to repeal the corkage ban on restaurants that have liquor licenses; and urging the Governor to sign the legislation into law to allow licensees to compete on an equal basis with BYOs and Washington, D.C. restaurants.

WHEREAS, Maryland law currently prohibits a licensee's customers from bringing their own alcohol onto the premises, thereby prohibiting the practice of corkage - the ability of a licensed restaurant owner to set his or her own policy as to whether or not to allow patrons to bring their own bottle of wine to drink with their meal; and

WHEREAS, Restaurants in Maryland that hold a liquor license are at a disadvantage to BYO (Bring Your Own bottle) unlicensed restaurants that are exempt from the prohibition as well as to nearby Washington, D.C. restaurants that attract affluent Maryland wine drinkers who regularly drive to D.C. to be able to enjoy their own special wines with their meals; and

WHEREAS, The Case for Corkage in Maryland, a fact sheet from Marylanders for Better Beer & Wine Laws, reports that restaurants allowing corkage have more flexibility with their wine lists because corkage means that a restaurant does not need to tie up as much capital in its inventory to satisfy its customers' diverse wine needs; and

WHEREAS, In addition, because older wines require special attention and are very expensive to acquire, many high-end restaurant patrons like to bring older bottles that they would not otherwise purchase from a wine list, and patrons that bring wine are more affluent on the average and spend more; and

WHEREAS, Corkage is a win-win situation - it allows patrons to exercise personal preference in choosing what beverage to enjoy with their meals, and the typical $15 - $20 corkage fee is pure profit for the restaurants that would have to charge an average of $50 a bottle to make the same profit; and

WHEREAS, Baltimore City licensed restaurants and private clubs wish to be able to offer their patrons the choice of bringing their own special wines to celebrate special occasions and to compete on equal level with the BYO's and Washington, D.C. restaurants in amenities offered, as well as in revenues generated.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2011 Session of the Maryland General Assembly are respectfully requested to introduce and obtain passage of legislation to repeal the corkage ban on restaurants that have liquor licenses; and urging the Governor to sign the legislation into law to allow licensees to compete on an equal basis with BYOs and Washington, D.C. restaurants.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Governor, the Honorable Chair and Members of the Baltimore City Senate Delegation; the Honorable Chair and Members of the Baltimore City House Delegation, the Director of the Mayor's Office of State Relations, the Baltimore City Board of Liquor License Commissioners, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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