

Wilmington, Delaware
June 2, 2022

#0180

Sponsor:

**Council
Member
Darby**

WHEREAS, House Bill No. 385 (HB No. 385) would allow municipalities with a population of 50,000 or more to legislate regulations that are more restrictive than State law regarding the location of liquor stores and require that the Alcohol Commissioner refuse licenses to any new establishments that do not comply with municipality ordinances. HB No. 385 would provide a necessary complement to Delaware § 543, Title 4 of the State Code, which establishes grounds for refusal of licensing for alcoholic liquor stores, for larger municipalities in the State; and

WHEREAS, there is extensive evidence demonstrating the adverse effects of having a high density of alcohol outlets within a municipality. Negative externalities associated with the oversaturation of off-premises liquor licensees include social harms, such as underage drinking, increased homicide and assault rates, self-reported injuries, motor vehicle and pedestrian accidents, as well as increased domestic abuse. They have also been tied to negative health outcomes, like increased incidences of suicides, binge drinking, and cancer; and

WHEREAS, because of the unique and specific effects of high densities of off-premises alcohol dispensaries, such as gas stations and liquor stores, HB No. 385 will be instrumental in preserving the appropriate balance between economic development and the health and safety of our communities. The public health outcomes in minority, low-income and young neighborhoods have been heavily impacted by off-premises alcohol density rates. Research has identified higher densities of liquor stores and retail alcohol outlets as statistically significant factors in violent crime and youth homicide rates; and

WHEREAS, Wilmington has one of the top crime rates per capita in the nation. There are approximately 50 stores with alcohol licenses, 44 schools and over 150 churches within the City's incorporated limits. HB No. 385 increases Council's capacity to adjust ordinances related to liquor licenses to correspond with the social and public health realities our City is currently facing.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON is strongly in favor of HB No. 385, which allows heavily populated municipalities in the State of Delaware to have stricter guidelines on liquor store licensure, with enforcement support from the Alcohol Commissioner.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wilmington City Council encourages the Delaware General Assembly to support HB No. 385 to bolster Wilmington's capacity to safeguard the quality of life for residents.

Passed by City Council,

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk

SYNOPSIS: This Resolution expresses Wilmington City Council's support for HB No. 385, which would allow the City of Wilmington to adopt ordinances imposing stricter regulations on the location of off-premises liquor licenses than those set forth by the State of Delaware.