



Alaska Cabaret, Hotel, Restaurant, and Retailers Association
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Dear Members of the Anchorage Assembly,

I have served as President & CEO of the Alaska Cabaret, Hotel, Restaurant, and Retailers Association (commonly known as Alaska CHARR) since 2018. Alaska CHARR has over 750 members and represents over 2000 hospitality establishments that employ nearly 36,000 workers across Alaska communities.

Anchorage's hospitality industry continues to grapple with significant challenges. Record-high operating costs and ongoing labor shortages are putting immense pressure on businesses across the state.

I am writing to respectfully urge you to vote **no** on Ordinance AO 2024-101, which would mandate ID checks for all alcohol sales at retail licensed premises within the municipality.

While ensuring the legal sale of alcohol is a significant priority for our industry, this ordinance introduces unnecessary and burdensome requirements that will disproportionately affect hospitality businesses in Anchorage. In a working group meeting, I requested data showing the need to support this ordinance but received none.

There are already laws in place for on-premises establishments to check identification for age verification purposes. Adding a 100% ID check for customers who are clearly of age does nothing additional to current law to reduce access of alcohol to underage persons.

Alcohol establishments have a significant liability interest in keeping alcohol out of the hands of those who misuse it. Is there data that shows that a significant amount of alcohol obtained by red-strip ID holders is in on-premises establishments? It seems very unlikely that someone would pay a significantly higher price to purchase a drink at an on-premises establishment than the lower cost of obtaining the same alcohol from a package store.

While I am unaware of data that shows the need for additional legal burdens to be placed on restaurants and bars, I have heard concerns and frustrations from numerous hospitality establishments that police do not respond to calls when employees seize fake ID cards from underage people attempting to enter and/or purchase. Those youth are then free to obtain another fake ID with no repercussion while the business faces significant legal recourse if the underage buyer enters the premises. Other significant concerns include:

- **Increased Operational Strain:** Requiring mandatory ID checks for every alcohol sale places additional strain on already overextended staff. Labor shortages mean many businesses are operating with fewer employees, and this requirement would further slow service, increase labor costs, and create inefficiencies.

- **Redundancy and Lack of Flexibility:** Most establishments already have robust procedures in place to verify IDs and ensure compliance with existing laws. Mandating a one-size-fits-all approach disregards the operational realities of different businesses and their customers.
- **Customer Frustration:** Requiring ID checks for every single sale, including for repeat customers or those clearly of legal age, leads to frustration, discouraging patronage and impacting revenue.
- **Seasonal/Tourism Businesses:** Many owners and operators of businesses that primarily serve tourists report that visitors are often clearly of legal drinking age but do not always carry identification on their person while on vacation. This will lead to unnecessary refusals of service, resulting in negative experiences for tourists and harming Anchorage’s reputation as a welcoming destination. For businesses that rely heavily on tourism, this ordinance will directly impact customer satisfaction, sales, and long-term revenue.

Our hospitality industry plays a vital role in Anchorage’s economy, serving both residents and visitors while supporting the broader community. Burdening these businesses with unnecessary code will undermine their recovery and growth at a critical time.

Thank you for considering these significant concerns. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and share additional insights into the challenges our industry faces.

Respectfully,



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Co-signed,
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