

Testimony on Oversight Hearing Regarding Cabaret Law

John Barclay

Bossa Nova Civic Club

June 19th, 2017

To Whom it May Concern:

I am a NYC bar manager who has repeatedly been adversely affected by the Cabaret Regulation and support a full repeal of the law which I believe is absurd, antiquated, racist and dangerous. I currently operate a small bar, that in 5 years has had literally zero noise complaints, is in good graces with our local precinct and community board, zero insurance claims, and exists peacefully with our neighbors. We have a Certificate of Occupancy, a Place of Assembly, emergency lighting, several egresses, regularly inspected fire extinguishers, we employ licensed and insured security guards who are also certified fire guards. We have gone through dozens and dozens of FDNY, DOB, SLA, DOH, and NYPD inspections yet we live in constant fear and paranoia of our city government. We have received a cabaret citation and know that if we do not continuously enforce a no-dancing policy we are risking our livelihoods.

I believe firmly that the city's "safety" argument in favor of supporting or revising the cabaret law to be terrifyingly dangerous. When New Yorkers are pushed out of hyper-regulated otherwise licensed venues on grounds of Cabaret Law they do not cease to dance rather they go further underground into completely unregulated and often times unsafe buildings. The government of NYC is fully aware of this and thus willfully endangering its citizens by not seeking out a practical solution.

I believe the inception of this law to be of racist intent and I know more often than not, the current enforcement protocols are still weaponized against marginalized groups particularly African American, Latino and LGBTQ.

The safety and noise concerns occasionally discussed in regards to Cabaret Law are already addressed extensively through various governmental departments. We insist that safety precautions should be applied based upon capacity and alcohol and not pertain to dancing at all.

I am asking NYC Council and Mayor Bill DeBlasio for a full repeal on the NYC Cabaret (No Dancing Law). We will settle for nothing less than the complete decriminalization of dancing.

Sincerely,

John Barclay

646.272.9092

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John Barclay', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.