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MAYOR DE BLASIO SIGNS LEGISLATION TO REPEAL CABARET LAW

NEW YORK— Mayor Bill de Blasio today signed a historic piece of legislation into law which will repeal the 91 year-old Cabaret Law. The Mayor previously held a public hearing for the bill on November 20th. Int. 1652-A, which passed the full council at the end of October, repeals all aspects of this law except for two safety requirements. Establishments previously required to obtain a cabaret license must continue to abide by these requirements. Establishments must install and maintain security cameras; and if they employ security guards, the law ensures such security guards are licensed pursuant to state law and to maintain a roster of such security guards

“It’s 2017, and this law just didn’t make sense. Nightlife is part of the New York melting pot that brings people together,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “We want to be a city where people can work hard, and enjoy their city’s nightlife without arcane bans on dancing. I thank Speaker Viverito, Council Member Espinal, and everyone who helped repeal this law, support businesses and keep our nightlife safe.”

“Today New York City makes history as we repeal the antiquated Cabaret Law. Since its inception, this law has been highly problematic, facing numerous legal challenges and complaints about its uneven and discriminatory enforcement,” said **Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. “While the repeal preserves important safety measures, it removes several redundant bureaucratic barriers, so that New Yorkers may dance freely and safely. I thank Council Member Espinal for championing the end of the Cabaret Law and Mayor de Blasio for his support and signing this repeal into law.”

The Prohibition-era Cabaret Law was originally created to monitor illegal venues, and while many specific restrictions embedded in the law came and went, the ban on dancing has remained. Though the law is rarely enforced in recent years, the law has survived numerous repeal attempts. As of today, only 104 establishments have the license due to the expensive and time-consuming application process.

“Artist, musicians, businesses owners, workers, and everyday New Yorkers looking to let loose will no longer have to fear the dance police will shut down their favorite venues,” said **Council Member Rafael Espinal**. “We are doubling down on our commitment to keep New York as a true sanctuary city and we will not allow a law that has historically been used to suppress and oppress various groups, continue to stay in our books. I am proud to champion this historic

repeal, which will support our nightlife businesses and community, while maintaining the much-needed safety measures we already have in place.”

“We look forward to supporting New York’s storied nightlife, to harnessing the creative entrepreneurial spirit that defines our city, and ensuring that establishments can operate in a way that keeps all New Yorkers safe and communities healthy,” said **Julie Menin, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment.**

“Social dancing is a huge part of life for so many of my constituents, and it’s a pastime that across class, ethnic, and cultural lines. I want to thank Mayor de Blasio for his support and my Bushwick neighbor Council Member Espinal for his leadership on this issue. Repealing this discriminatory law was long overdue. It’s time to let NYC dance!” said **Council Member Antonio Reynoso.**

“The Cabaret Law is a backward rule of a backward era. It’s an overreaching and overbearing policy that has always been about targeting people, with moral, monetary or malicious intent. It’s nearly one century old, and has not once served a redeemable purpose other than being rolled-back bit by bit. We have laws on the books and enforcement in place to fulfill any safety and quality of life issues a venue may or may not present. Requiring a permit to dance, in this day and age, and in this city, is silly. I thank Mayor de Blasio and Councilmember Espinal for getting rid of it,” said **Senator Martin Malavé Dilan.**

Assembly Chair of the Committee on Tourism, Parks, Arts, & Sports Development, Daniel O’Donnell said, “The cabaret law has been a shameful relic of racism in New York City for almost a century. The law has been a weight on small businesses, discouraged the economic growth that accompanies tourism, and most importantly has been used as a weapon against historically marginalized groups. Thanks to Councilman Espinal, the Mayor, and all others involved, I can finally tell my friends from all over the world and all walks of life “Let’s Dance!”

“The repeal of the unreasonable and damaging Cabaret Law was long overdue, and the musicians of New York City applaud the Mayor and New York City Council for bringing it to an end,” said **Tino Gagliardi, President, Associated Musicians of Greater New York, Local 802 AFM.** “This law, steeped in racism and bigotry, has long run contrary to values New Yorkers hold dear—inclusion, diversity and creative freedom and has limited performers' freedom of expression. Its repeal is an important part of the ongoing work to support our creative and nightlife community, making this is a great day for musicians and music lovers across the cultural capital of the world.”

"This long overdue repeal decriminalizes a fundamental cultural expression and puts an end to the absurdity of an effective NYC ban on social dancing. This historic repeal is a very positive step toward a vibrant, safer and more inclusive cultural nightlife. We want to thank Council Member Espinal and our fellow advocacy organizations for their tireless efforts in this battle. With the repeal of the Cabaret Law, we can finally right this historic wrong,” said **Olympia Kazi, NYC Artist Coalition.**

“On behalf of the ten thousand dancers that celebrate 80+ styles of dance in the annual Dance Parade, we are grateful for City Council Member Rafael Espinal’s leadership to repeal the City's Cabaret Law, righting this longstanding wrong. We invite everyone to celebrate our 12th year under the theme "The Cabaret of Life" which acknowledges the importance of diversity and the arts in everyday life,” said **Greg Miller, Executive Director, Dance Parade New York.**

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