

Legalize Dancing in NYC: Tell City Council and Mayor de Blasio to Repeal the Cabaret Law!

Did you know it's illegal to dance in most bars, restaurants and even well established clubs in New York City? Or that, unless it's a performance, dancing is not recognized as a form of expression protected under the First Amendment?

In 1926, while liquor was bootlegged and Jazz was shaking things up in Harlem, New York City instituted the Cabaret Law that required establishments serving food or drink to obtain a separate license before permitting any dancing or live music on their premises. This law successfully sought to police and restrict the interracial mixing happening in dance clubs uptown. Almost 100 years later, though times and racial attitudes have changed, the Cabaret Law is not only still in effect and enforced, but contemporary zoning regulations effectively make dancing with your friends absolutely illegal in large parts of the city!

New York's restrictive dancing regulations affect not only individual dancers and communities, but businesses too, who suffer under the weight of intransigent bureaucracy, legal costs, irregular enforcement and disproportionate fines. Consequently, the number of legal venues has also been declining at an alarming rate. In the 1960s, in the Five Boroughs of New York City there were over 12,000 Cabaret Licenses. By 2008 there were only 179 and as of September 4th 2012, just 127 and currently only 97. (See current cabaret venues from NYC Open Data [here](#))

After an attempt to repeal the Cabaret Laws on First Amendment grounds failed in 2006, the only avenue toward meaningful change now is through legislative action and to pressure Mayor de Blasio to step up to the challenge and change the law.

We need your support! Please help us repeal the 1926 Cabaret Law and remove the following 7 words from the Zoning Code text: "or establishments of any capacity with dancing." These reforms will have no effect on the applicability or enforcement of any of the numerous noise, fire, safety, alcohol and drug ordinances that keep our persons and venues safe and our neighborhoods livable. Help us free dancing by signing this petition and voting for candidates who support and advocate for it!

Social dancing should be freely available to anyone and everyone in any venue in the City of New York where it is safe to do so. No neighborhood should be zoned "No Dancing Allowed." Local communities and small businesses should be allowed to dance and flourish.

Signed Rosaline Dumanis, 6/18/17

Nutley, New Jersey 7110

United States