

Written Testimony in Opposition to SB0972

Senate Bill 0972 – Baltimore City 40th Alcoholic Beverages District – Authorizations and Revisions

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Deepak Poudel, and I am writing to respectfully submit testimony regarding Senate Bill 0972 – Baltimore City 40th Alcoholic Beverages District – Authorizations and Revisions. I would like to express my opposition to the bill as currently proposed.

The bill would reduce the operating hours of certain alcohol-serving establishments in Baltimore City's 40th District from 6:00 AM – 2:00 AM to 10:00 AM – 10:00 PM. While public safety is an important priority for every community, this proposed change places an undue burden on small businesses that have been operating responsibly for many years.

In particular, Pratt Liquor & Bar is a local business that has served residents in the community for a long time. Businesses like this provide jobs, generate tax revenue, and contribute to the neighborhood's daily life. A significant reduction in operating hours would greatly limit their ability to operate successfully and could negatively affect both the business owner and the employees who rely on those hours for their livelihoods.

It is important to recognize that crime in any district is a complex issue that cannot reasonably be attributed to one individual business. Pratt Liquor & Bar has taken proactive measures to maintain a safe environment by investing in security and monitoring activities around the premises. These efforts demonstrate a willingness by the owners to work toward improving safety in the neighborhood.

Restricting the operating hours of one establishment while other similar businesses in nearby areas continue to operate under different rules raises concerns about fairness and consistency. Policies aimed at improving public safety should be applied in a balanced way that does not single out one business without clear justification.

Additionally, many customers rely on the existing operating hours for convenience, especially those who work late shifts or irregular schedules. Limiting these hours may simply shift activity to other locations rather than addressing the broader issues facing the district.

Small businesses are a vital part of Baltimore's economic and social fabric. Decisions that significantly impact their operations should be carefully evaluated to ensure they are both fair and effective.

For these reasons, I respectfully encourage the committee to reconsider the proposed restrictions in SB0972 and allow responsible businesses such as Pratt Liquor & Bar to continue operating under their current permitted hours.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Deepak Poudel