

Senator Boscola Welcomes Passage of Legislation to Aid Local Restaurants Making Covid-Era Outdoor Seating Provisions At Licensed Establishments Permanent

By Senator Lisa M. Boscola Office

HARRISBURG, PA – July 2, 2024 – Senator Lisa M. Boscola (D-Northampton) was joined by a nearly all members of the Pennsylvania Senate today to pass legislation that will make updates to the state Liquor Code. The legislation, sponsored by Representative Matthew Gergely (D-Allegheny), amends the Liquor Code to make numerous changes, including making COVID-era outdoor seating provisions at licensed establishments permanent.

“Providing for outdoor seating was a lifeline for restaurants both here in the Lehigh Valley and across Pennsylvania during the pandemic,” Boscola said. “The restaurant industry continues to face many challenges and this legislation will be beneficial to a significant number of these small businesses.”

The outdoor seating provision was enacted in 2021, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, to provide flexibility to restaurants in response to the pandemic and the various restrictions it placed on their businesses. Specifically, the provision extended the licensed premises of an establishment to include any outside serving area that is immediately adjacent to the existing licensed areas; or within one thousand feet of the main licensed building.

The amendment, based on Senator Boscola’s Senate Bill 1180, makes this provision permanent, allowing restaurants to continue serving patrons in outdoor seating areas. “Restaurants found that these extensions were popular with customers and helped with the bottom line. This bill makes sure that they are now here to stay,” Boscola noted. House Bill 829 passed 47-3 and now returns to the House of Representatives for concurrence.



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