

HB1017 School Events Must Accept Cash Testimony in House Education Committee By Representative John Sjaarda January 2025

Madam Chair, friends and colleagues of the Education committee, today I bring before you, HB1017.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today about an issue that impacts accessibility and fairness at our schools. This is a bill that requires the acceptance of cash payment for the admittance to a school affiliated event.

It was brought to my attention last year that some schools in the state were not allowing entrance into a school event with cash payment.

In our increasingly digital world, it's easy to assume that everyone has access to credit cards, apps on their phone, or other cashless options. However, this assumption overlooks a lot of people. Not everyone has access to digital payments. Some students, parents, grandparents and community members may not have bank accounts, credit cards, or smartphones. By refusing to accept cash at school events, we unintentionally exclude people who rely on physical currency.

Cash is not just another payment option; as you see on this dollar bill it says "This note is legal tender for all debts, public and private." So if someone wants to pay with cash they should have the right to do so. It is legal tender recognized by our government. Even though I believe in a limited government, I recognize that this is a place where government needs to do its job.

It is universally accessible and does not require technology, internet, or a bank account. When we accept cash at school events—whether it's for tickets, concessions, or fundraising activities—we ensure that everyone student, parent, grandparent or community member can participate fully and equally.

Accepting cash provides a practical solution for young students who don't have access to digital payments. Many students earn cash for small jobs or receive allowances from their families in physical currency. By allowing them to use cash at school events, we teach them financial responsibility and give them the opportunity to engage without feeling left out due to payment restrictions.

Additionally, accepting cash can benefit school fundraising efforts. Cash transactions are often quicker than processing digital payments, especially in high-traffic situations like bake sales or sporting events. When people have cash on hand and see an opportunity to support a good cause—whether it's buying a raffle ticket or donating to a fundraiser—they are more likely to act on impulse. By refusing cash payments, we risk losing out on these contributions.

Some might argue that going cashless is more convenient or safer because it reduces the risk of theft or errors in handling money. While these concerns are valid, they can be addressed by

providing a limited number of cash payment lines and provide security by having 2 sets of trained eyes on cash payments.

In conclusion, accepting cash at school events is not just about convenience—It ensures that everyone in our community has the opportunity to participate fully in the life of the school without barriers or limitations.

I have some great citizens here that want to testify on why they want to see this bill passed. Thank you for your time and consideration. Let's work together to make our school events accessible for all! I will stand by for any questions.

Rebuttal if needed:

Consider the reliability of cash compared to digital systems. Technology is not foolproof—credit card readers can malfunction, Wi-Fi networks can fail, and mobile payment apps can experience outages. Cash, on the other hand, always works. It's a simple and effective backup that ensures transactions can continue smoothly even when technology lets us down.