

More Street Vendors, More Jobs? Council Considers Bill

By Roy Edroso in [Citystate](#), [Featured](#), [In the Streets](#), [The Money Trail](#), [The New Depression](#)
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Are you a victim of [New York's soaring unemployment rate, currently at 8.1 percent](#)? Now that the weather's warm, maybe you want to try your hand at selling hot dogs. The city council is looking at [Intro 324-A](#), which would raise the number of street vendor permits from the current 4,000 to 15,000 for merchandise permits and 25,000 for food vending. Yesterday morning [several advocates gathered at City Hall](#) to agitate for the reform. The Mayor is playing it cautious, citing "quality of life" -- street congestion, enforcement difficulties, etc. Advocates counter that there are plenty of extra vendors already, but operating under black market conditions, sometimes paying thousands of dollars for "borrowed" licenses. (State senator Daniel Squadron has [proposed fingerprinting illegal vendors](#); a vendor advocate sees this as "a direct attack on the immigrant population.")

The [Street Vendor Project](#) says the bill would create 10,000 new jobs, a desirable outcome to be sure. But street vending is [a hard dollar](#) in any case. And despite New Yorkers' [increasing](#)

[fatness](#), will they really supply enough business for thousands of extra food vendors? Restaurants [aren't doing so hot](#) as it is, and [they're not going to like](#) a surge in discount competition one little bit.

Maybe the council can fix it so merchandise vendors can offer something that citizens can't get enough of, like [handbag samples](#) or [summer haircuts](#). Maybe they can catch live fish from the East River and sell them as pets. Public health? Licensing issues? C'mon, let's exercise our famous creativity and ingenuity. They're more likely to help than another couple thousand shish kebab carts. *Photo (cc) [dandeluca](#).*