



May 11, 2026

The Honorable Ned Lamont
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Supporting Senate Bill 439

Dear Governor Lamont:

On behalf of the vending and unattended retail industry in Connecticut, **we ask for your signature on Senate Bill 439** to provide needed clarity to operators of unattended retail locations that they may use fixed, no-audio video cameras for security and loss prevention in workplace micro markets.

Growth of Workplace Food and Beverage Options

Traditional vending machines have served employees and workplaces across Connecticut and the nation for decades. These machines have long provided convenient access to beverages and snacks in offices, manufacturing facility breakrooms, hospitals, and other workplaces.

In the last fifteen years, many vending locations have evolved into micro markets, modern forms of unattended retail that dramatically expand food and beverage options for employees.

Micro markets are small, self-service retail spaces typically located in workplace breakrooms or common areas. Instead of purchasing items from inside a vending machine, employees can walk to the market, browse open shelves and coolers, select the items they want, and complete a quick checkout at a self-service kiosk or mobile payment system. This grab-and-go format mirrors the experience of a small convenience store.

Because products are displayed on open shelving and in refrigerated cases, micro markets allow operators to offer far more variety than traditional vending machines. Employees can access fresh foods, salads, sandwiches, yogurt, fruit, healthier snack options, and beverages that simply cannot fit in a vending machine. In some cases, micro markets even meet federal stocking requirements that allow operators to accept SNAP benefits, further expanding access to food for consumers.

Importantly, these markets are unattended retail locations. There is no cashier present. As a result, operators rely on limited security measures to monitor the retail area and inventory. The primary security tool used in these environments is fixed video cameras without audio capability.

These cameras are typically motion-activated and are used only to monitor the retail area where transactions and product selection occur. Their purpose is not to monitor unrelated employee activity, but to deter theft and monitor merchandise in an unattended retail environment. Employees are always clearly notified of the presence of cameras through conspicuous signage.

Need for SB 439

In the last few years, as operators in Connecticut have sought to offer micro markets as a workplace benefit, they have encountered challenges because existing state law broadly prohibits cameras in employee spaces such as breakrooms. Because micro markets are often located within those same breakrooms or lounges, this prohibition has made it difficult or impossible to install or operate these markets.

Operators have had to revert micro markets in Connecticut to traditional vending machines in certain facilities, significantly restricting the availability of fresh and healthy food options for employees in those workplaces.

SB 439 provides an important and practical solution. The legislation would clarify that operators may use fixed video monitoring of unattended retail within employee areas. This limited coverage would remain consistent with the intent of the statute by focusing only on the retail space itself and maintaining the law's prohibition on audio recording.

This clarification will ensure that operators can effectively secure their inventory while preserving employee privacy protections.

Purpose of Cameras

The presence of cameras in an unattended retail environment serves as a deterrent to theft. Because there is no cashier present, the visibility of cameras helps encourage honest transactions. When micro markets operate without any security, losses become untenable and force operators to revert to limited food and beverage options from vending machines.

Second, cameras allow operators to review irregular or incomplete transactions when they occur. If a payment system error or unusual checkout activity is reported, operators can confirm what occurred and ensure that the system is functioning properly.

Third, when a customer leaves the market without paying for items—especially when an individual repeatedly does so – operators notify the host workplace so the issue can be addressed internally. Employers handle these situations through their own workplace policies rather than operators pursuing any other enforcement measures.

These limited uses of cameras ensure the integrity of the unattended retail system while allowing micro markets to continue providing expanded food options for employees.

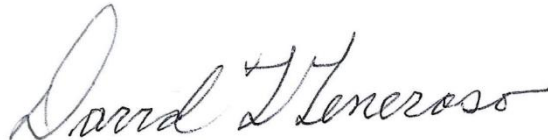
Conclusion

For these reasons, the New England Refreshment Services Association (NERSA),¹ the National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA),² and the unattended retail providers across the state respectfully urge your signature on SB 439. We are available at mhogg@namanow.org or 571-367-9006 to answer any questions and engage in further discussion on this critical issue.

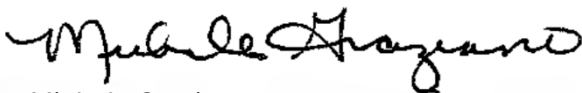
Respectfully,



Michael Cicarelli
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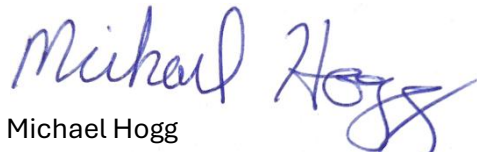
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¹ The New England Refreshment Services Association represents an industry that employs over 2,000 people in Connecticut, pays over \$141 million in annual wages, and is responsible for more than \$470 million in annual economic impact in Connecticut. <https://namanow.org/voice/economic-research/>

² The National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA) represents the United States convenience services industry, with its core membership comprised of owners and operators of vending machines and micro markets, office coffee/tea/water, and pantry services providers.