



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Iwen Chu

Senator Iwen Chu Announces New Small Business Protections Against Retail Theft and Assault on Workers in the FY 2025 State Budget

IWEN CHU | May 6, 2024

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(Brooklyn, NY) On Friday, Senator Chu met with small business owners in her district to highlight key provisions in the state budget that help make it easier for them to protect themselves from retail theft and strengthen the penalty for assault on workers. Thanks to Senator Chu and the Senate Democratic Majority's advocacy, this year's budget also included the ability for prosecutors to aggregate retail theft crimes in order to effectively target the

repeating few who account for a majority of stolen merchandise, and created the new felony crime of an assault of a retail worker. It also included the Commercial Security Tax Credit, which allows qualifying small businesses to apply for rebates when they make certain security upgrades. Combined, this year's budget offers a timely response to the pressing concerns of many small businesses.

Friday's press conference with over 30 local small businesses—many of which are owned by new or first-generation Americans—highlighted how these measures will meaningfully address ongoing security concerns and bolster the economic foundation of southern Brooklyn. By protecting the material and financial interests of these owners, and reducing the risks that they need to undertake in order to run their shops, Senator Chu is continuing to promote the economic success of their families and the district as a whole.

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Senator Iwen Chu said, "Everyone who visits or lives in my district sees how every commercial street is lined with small businesses providing goods and services of all varieties. This rich network of commerce has allowed our community to prosper from the bottom up, and given more people the opportunity to participate in the American dream. But too often, that has come with unfair costs of doing business, like theft, vandalism, and assault. This year's budget includes tools to address the safety and security concerns of small business owners and retail workers and I'm very proud to have fought for their inclusion. Unlike large corporations, one bad day can undo years of hard work for my small business owners. With these measures, we're giving them more breathing room, and making it easier to do business."

Paul Li, President of the Bay Parkway Merchants' Association and a local small business owner, said, "Many Asian Businesses are still struggling post-COVID. Retail theft happens on a daily basis. I hope the new law will give law enforcement more tools to stop retail theft, so that small business owners and workers can feel safe."

Phillip Xu, owner of the Bay Parkway Cafe, the site of the press conference, said, “My restaurant was vandalized in an incident that disturbed both customers and my staff. I am grateful to Senator Chu for fighting for legislation that will help deter these crimes and help us all feel safer.”

Last year, Senator Chu and her office spoke with over 700 businesses in the district to identify and better support their needs. Almost unanimously, many small businesses expressed similar experiences and lamented that those responsible for certain crimes were not being held accountable.

In an effort to deter this behavior, Senator Chu handed out hundreds of free posters to local businesses, with more available to any who requests one to continue educating the public on these new provisions.