

MOTION

With the proliferation of smartphones, grocery stores in the City have begun to offer digital-only discounts, access to which requires a customer to connect to a store-specific phone application. The use of these apps necessitates a modern, and often expensive, smartphone; a phone plan with a roaming Internet connection; an app log-in; and other requirements that can be barriers to access.

The Pew Research Center reports that one in four older adults lack Internet connectivity and that 39 percent do not own a mobile phone. In addition, many immigrant households lack consistent access to smartphones, may face language barriers, and often have data privacy concerns, especially in light of the federal government's recent actions relative to immigrant populations. By insisting that customers access these discounts through smartphones, grocery stores are effectively excluding a large number of City residents who lack the means to connect to this digital infrastructure.

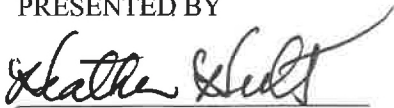
These digital-only coupons come at a time when inflation and food costs are at a record high. In 2024, the Consumer Price Index for Food rose by nearly five percent. Additionally, since the beginning of the COVID pandemic, the overall Consumer Price Index has risen by 24 percent. These cost-of-living increases are now being exacerbated with the introduction of the federal government's 2025 tariff policies, the full costs of which have yet to be understood.

Jurisdictions such as San Diego, New Jersey, Illinois, and Washington State have already either proposed or passed measures that require equal access to equivalent digital and physical coupons. The City of Los Angeles must remain vigilant in ensuring that our economy is inclusionary and accessible to everyone. In order to ensure that all City residents, including those who lack access to smartphones and Internet connection, are able to access affordable groceries, the City should adopt an ordinance that allows them to benefit from the same discounts as digital coupon holders.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council direct the Chief Legislative Analyst to prepare a report summarizing grocery transparency laws in other jurisdictions, best practices, and identifying policy recommendations for the implementation of a similar policy in Los Angeles; and

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Council request the City Attorney, with the assistance of the relevant City departments, to prepare and present an ordinance that would require grocery stores that offer digital-only discounts to make readily-available physical coupons with identical pricing available to consumers.

PRESENTED BY



HEATHER HUTT

Councilmember, 10th District

PRESENTED BY



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SECONDED BY:



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