

# The Connecticut General Assembly



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Contact: Tess Koenigsmark  
860-240-8790

## **Rep. Miller Applauds Passage of Bill Allowing Cash Back from Gift Cards**

*Consumer protection bill goes to Governor's desk*

**Rep. Patricia Billie Miller** (D-Stamford) applauded passage of legislation that will allow consumers to ask retailers for cash back on gift cards with a balance of less than three dollars remaining. HB 5564, AN ACT CONCERNING CARD BALANCES, passed the Senate Wednesday evening, its final step before going to the Governor's desk.

The legislation aims to help consumers redeem the full value of gift cards. Consumers who are left with a very low balance on their card after making a purchase often never redeem the card's full value. Under this legislation, the card holder can receive any remaining balance under three dollars providing they have proof of purchase.

"Consumers deserve to get what they paid for. They're losing money that rightfully belongs to them," **Rep. Miller** said. "Allowing people to get cash back when a gift card has less than three dollars remaining is a simple and fair solution. It helps consumers hold on to their money without placing an undue burden on businesses."

The three dollar amount strikes a middle ground between similar laws in eleven other states. Some states allow consumers to ask for cash back when a gift card has less than one dollar remaining, while in California retailers must return a gift card's remaining cash value to the customer if the card has a balance of less than \$10.

"When someone receives a \$30 gift card, they expect that they will get \$30 worth of value out of it," **Rep. Miller** said. "This legislation comes down to basic fairness. If someone can't afford to make a purchase that costs more than the amount remaining on their gift card, that money is truly lost."

As the popularity of gift cards has risen, some retailers have begun to count unredeemed gift cards as revenue income, raising concerns about the rights of consumers. According to CEB Tower Group, a research and analytic company, close to a billion dollars of gift card sales went unredeemed in 2015, an increase from \$750 million in 2014.

Connecticut previously enacted a well-received gift card consumer protection bill in 2003, prohibiting retailers from attaching expiration dates or monthly fees to gift cards.

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