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ELO-RIVERA**
COUNCILMEMBER FOR
SAN DIEGO DISTRICT 9



The Office of Councilmember
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Proudly Representing District 5

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Joint Statement from Councilmember Elo-Rivera and Councilmember von Wilpert on Grocery Pricing Transparency Ordinance Going Into Effect

SAN DIEGO, CA — We are proud that San Diego's **Grocery Pricing Transparency Ordinance** takes effect tomorrow (***Wednesday, Oct. 1, 2025***) marking a significant step forward in ensuring fair access to grocery discounts for all San Diegans, especially seniors, working families, and those without smartphones or reliable internet.

This ordinance was created in response to years of national advocacy to end the era of digital-only discounts that excluded too many of our neighbors. It ensures that if a discount is offered online or through an app, it must also be accessible in-store, with limited exceptions.

Throughout the ordinance's development, we worked closely with grocery industry stakeholders. Early conversations highlighted the challenge of limiting non-digital access to only paper coupons. In response, we updated the ordinance to include a more flexible standard: "in-store alternatives." This change reflects our shared goal of making it easier for San Diegans to access savings, not harder. Many grocers, including Ralphs, have already stepped up and are providing in-store alternatives to digital coupons—proving that compliance is both achievable and consumer-friendly.

We recognize that some stores have chosen to remove digital discounts instead of offering in-store options. That decision is not required and is, instead, a choice that undermines the intent to *expand*, not eliminate, access to savings. While a unique and unfortunate business decision, we do hope and expect all grocers, including those who have yet to do so, will follow the lead of others who are successfully offering in-store discounts to meet the ordinance's goal: ***fair access to savings for all***. We look forward to seeing all retailers—including Albertsons, Vons, and Pavilions—follow the lead of other grocers honoring the spirit of this law and supporting their customers.

What Success Looks Like

As the ordinance is implemented, we'll be closely monitoring whether:

- Discounts are accessible to all customers, regardless of digital access
- Retailers comply in good faith without reducing customer savings
- Community feedback, particularly from seniors and digitally disconnected residents

This ordinance is about restoring fairness, and we will continue working with the public and the industry to ensure that happens.

Enforcement Details

The City of San Diego is committed to a reasonable, education-first enforcement approach. As written in the ordinance: "The City shall give written notice of a violation to a grocer prior to initiating an enforcement action. Written notices shall give a grocer 15 days to cure any violation."

This built-in grace period, which was preceded by a multi-month implementation delay, is meant to ensure businesses have time to make necessary adjustments before facing penalties.

Violations of the ordinance may be pursued by the City as acts of unfair competition within the meaning of Section 17200 of the California Business and Professions Code, and are subject to the remedies and penalties outlined in Division 7, Part 2, Chapter 5 of the same code, as it may be amended.

It's also important to clarify that: "No private right of action is intended or created under this Division."

In short: enforcement will be handled by the City, not through private lawsuits. Residents who believe a store is not in compliance will be able to submit complaints through the City Attorney's Office. Residents who believe a grocery store is not complying with the ordinance can report concerns directly to the City Attorney's Affirmative Civil Enforcement Unit: www.sandiego.gov/city-attorney/resources/affirmative-civil-enforcement-unit. For additional questions or concerns, they can also contact them by emailing cityattorney@sandiego.gov or calling (619) 236-6220.

Finally, the ordinance also includes built-in transparency. The City Manager, or designated department, will provide biannual reports to a Council Committee summarizing complaints and actions taken under this law.

Closing

This ordinance reflects our belief that San Diego should work for everyone—not just those with access to the latest technology. We are confident that grocers can comply in a way that maintains meaningful discounts for all shoppers.

We appreciate the public's continued engagement and remain confident that grocers across the city can and will do the right thing for their customers.

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