In the Spring of 2016, students from the School for Legal Studies set out to investigate small businesses in their neighborhood. What do small businesses add to a community? What are the challenges of owning a store? Who decides where small businesses go?

**What’s a small business?**

Customers decide where small businesses operate. Foot traffic... where the area is, and how close it is to transportation, factor into the decisions that business owners have to make when they open up.

—Robert Cornegy Jr.

“The price of the space is reflective of what the market wants, what the market will bear. (It can) reduce people to come in because it’s seen as valuable and people want to be there. There’s some growth. And for those neighborhoods that haven’t reached that stage, (a lower price) is a way for them... to attract businesses to their neighborhood.”

—John Banks, President, Real Estate Board of New York

**What challenges do small businesses face?**

An owner of a property has a right to determine what’s in their best interest. It might mean that their... to decide, right? Not for the world to decide.”

—Steve Barrison, Vice President, Small Business Congress

**Why are small businesses important to New York?**

“Studios have shown... that Neighborhood Mom & Pops will invest back into the community at a 75-80% rate higher than a big chain store... the investment and the connection with the community is totally different, and that also impacts how you feel and the sense of the community.”

—Artineh Havan, Executive Director, Grand St. Business Improvement District

The Small Business Jobs Survival Act (SBJSA)

This bill is designed to bring accountability of landlords who would be unreasonable things to small business tenants to get them out and have them break their lease.” —Robert Cornegy Jr.

“This bill is to help the landlords, so the landlord isn’t stuck with an empty space for a year or two, and it guaranteed a 15% increase, and then the tenant still has to go to court. It doesn’t help the tenant—it’s ridiculous.” —Steve Barrison

THERE’S NO BUSINESS LIKE SMALL BUSINESS!

There are a few proposed policies to help protect small businesses in NYC, but not everybody agrees about them.

City Council Bill No. 851

This bill aims to protect small business tenants from being harassed by landlords who want them out of their space.

"The bill is designed to bring accountability of landlords who would be unreasonable things to small business tenants to get them out and have them break their lease.” —Robert Cornegy Jr.

“This bill is to help the landlords, so the landlord isn’t stuck with an empty space for a year or two, and it guaranteed a 15% increase, and then the tenant still has to go to court. It doesn’t help the tenant—it’s ridiculous.” —Steve Barrison

**What is the City doing to protect small businesses?**

The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) is a nonprofit organization that uses the power of design and art to increase awareness and social action.

CUP provides training and resources to help small business owners make sure receipts are accurate and pay fines, handle violations and pay fines, make sure prices and payment methods are complete and correct, post prices and payment methods, check if you need a business license at: nyc.gov/businesses.

**Who decides where small businesses go?**

Make sure your sales ads aren’t false or misleading.

Resolve customer complaints.

Handle violations and pay fines.

Post your refund policy.

Know the rules for tobacco sales and signage.

Make sure receipts are complete and correct.

Know the items you cannot sell.

Check if you need a business license at: nyc.gov/businesses.

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Check if you need a business license at: nyc.gov/businesses.

**Why are small businesses important to New York?**

“As neighborhoods are changing, as property values are increasing... a lot of people have had to leave this neighborhood because they can’t afford the rents, both in residential housing and the commercial businesses...”

—Michael Bblasie Becker, Deputy Commissioner, New York City Department of Small Business Services

We go by on Grand [Street]. I’m friendly with the store owners and we play around but I didn’t know the story before.

Michael Lazano, student, School for Legal Studies

Talking to people in government was a real experience for me. I was surprised that there’s a person in power who is actually pretty easy to talk to, and can inspire people to get involved in this issue.”

—Edison Espinal, student, School for Legal Studies

Thank you to our interviewees: Michael Bblasie Becker, NYC Department of Small Business Services; John Banks (REBNY); Steve Barrison (Small Business Congress); Robert Cornegy Jr., New York City Council, (Grand Street BID), Lisa Moneim, Deputy Commissioner, NYC Department of Small Business Services; and the Center for Urban Pedagogy.

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