North Dakota legislators repeal law that limited Sunday shopping

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Starting in August, North Dakota stores will have the option of being open for business on Sunday mornings, the result of a legislative change this year that repealed the state’s longstanding “blue” laws. HB 1097 was signed in March by Gov. Doug Burgum. He hailed the measure as supporting “freedom, fairness and local control,” as well as a way to help the state’s Main Street businesses compete with online retailers.

Previous repeal efforts had failed, The Bismarck Tribune reports, and this year’s vote on HB 1097 was close in the North Dakota House: 25-21. (The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 56-35.) The state’s sales restrictions have applied to the hours between midnight on Saturday and noon on Sunday. North Dakota Code has a 44-point list of “items prohibited from sale or rental” during this time frame — from clothes and household appliances, to hardware and musical instruments. Opponents of HB 1097 argued that North Dakota’s Sunday morning sales ban has ensured time for family and worship.

In recent years, the Indiana and Minnesota legislatures ended state prohibitions on the Sunday sale of carryout alcohol. Bans of some kind on the Sunday sale of motor vehicles remain in place in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin.
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