

The Common Cents Act

April 2026

Core Message

The Common Cents Act establishes a clear, national standard for cash rounding following the elimination of the penny, reducing consumer confusion, easing compliance burdens, and protecting retailers from legal risk.

Context

Following the retirement of the one-cent coin in 2025, states have begun implementing their own rules for rounding cash transactions. These laws vary widely in how rounding is applied—differing on formulas, timing, scope, treatment of mixed tender transactions, notice requirements, and handling of government payments.

As of early April, nine states have enacted rounding laws, creating a fragmented regulatory landscape.

The Common Cents Act (H.R. 3074 / S. 1525) would establish a uniform federal standard, allowing businesses to round cash transactions to the nearest nickel while providing legal safe harbor against potential litigation, including discrimination claims. The bill also includes provisions related to the future composition of the nickel.

In the House, Financial Services Committee leadership is preparing the bill for consideration soon. Senate momentum is expected to build following strong House passage, with coordinated advocacy efforts underway across the retail sector.

Walmart Position

Walmart supports passage of the Common Cents Act.

Why Does This Matter to Walmart?

Walmart is currently navigating a patchwork of inconsistent state and local rounding laws, creating significant compliance challenges and operational complexity. A uniform federal standard would restrain costs, simplify implementation, and mitigate legal risk across Walmart's nationwide operations.

Key Messages/Talking Points

- The elimination of the penny has created inconsistent state-level rounding requirements, leading to confusion and compliance challenges.
- Retailers handling cash transactions face legal and financial risks without clear, uniform guidance.
- The Common Cents Act establishes a national standard for rounding, ensuring fairness, consistency, and operational efficiency for both businesses and consumers.
- The bill provides a safe harbor from lawsuits arising from conflicting state and local laws.
- The legislation protects key services, including SNAP compliance and check-cashing for unbanked and underbanked customers.

If You Get Tough Questions

- **Q: Why is a federal standard necessary—can't states manage this individually?**
A: A patchwork of state laws creates confusion, increases compliance costs, and exposes businesses to legal risk. A national standard ensures consistency for consumers and retailers operating across multiple states.
- **Q: Will rounding harm consumers or lead to unfair pricing?**
A: No. Rounding applies only to cash transactions and is done to the nearest nickel, balancing small gains and losses over time. Electronic payments remain unaffected, and posted prices do not change.
- **Q: Does this impact SNAP or vulnerable populations?**
A: No. The legislation is designed to ensure SNAP compliance and prevent differential treatment of beneficiaries. It also preserves access to services like check-cashing that are critical for unbanked populations.
- **Q: How would rounding work in practice?**
A: Rounding would apply only to the cash portion of a transaction, typically through the change returned to the customer, rather than altering listed prices or taxes. Businesses may continue to accept exact change when provided.
- **Q: Does this mandate how businesses must round?**
A: The bill supports flexible, permissive implementation, allowing businesses to adopt practical approaches while maintaining consistency with federal standards.