

Technology Food Nazi's: Sweetgreen, should not force people to get spied on

Sweetgreen forces the hungry to use Silicon Valley financial spying instead of cash

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After pulling out money to pay for food last week at Surfside in Northwest Washington, customers Aaron Bateman and Roxann Barr hear from cashier Obed Amaya that the restaurant does not accept cash. (Jahi Chikwendiu/The Washington Post)

Aaron Bateman pulled out a few bills to pay for a taco lunch in the nation's capital. To his surprise, his money was no good in the city where money is printed.

Surfside, a 24-hour Mexican eatery in Dupont Circle, doesn't take cash. No cash means no register for robbers to empty out, no bills for workers to slip into their pockets and no change-counting holding up lines.

The global cashless movement has reached Washington, where a growing number of fast-casual establishments and other spots are saying no to greenbacks in favor of plastic and mobile payments. Sweetgreen, the national salad chain founded by Georgetown University graduates, went cashless in most of its locations last year. Other cashless spots include a Menchie's frozen-yogurt shop downtown, the posh Barcelona Wine Bar on 14th Street NW and the Bruery beer store at Union Market.

Soon, they may be breaking the law.

Critics of no-cash policies say they shut out the 1 in 10 District residents who don't have bank accounts and undocumented immigrants who can't easily sign up for cards. Some people also pay in cash so they can better track their spending or to avoid having their card information stolen.