



*A member of the vast common-sense conspiracy.*

Not affiliated with any candidate, campaign or political organization.  
We are unabashed about our preferences.

## Self Service or Full Service, You'll have to get out of your car before getting gas starting in 2017

*Some Independent Gasoline Retailers Are At Odds With Their Lobbyist Who Is Pushing Self Service*

*O'Scanlon: Self Service bill will give consumers and retailers a choice. Will decriminalize a harmless convenience*



*At the self-service island of a gas station, an unidentified nun operates a pump to fill her Buick Skylark, 1975. (Photo by Susuan Wood/Getty Images)*

Starting in October of 2017 New Jersey drivers will have to get out of their cars, swipe their own credit or debit card and enter a PIN before an attendant can pump gas into their car, according to a report at [NorthJersey.com](http://NorthJersey.com).

Consumers will no longer be allowed to hand their cards gas station employees due to new credit card security requirements, *The Record* quotes Sal Risalvato, executive director of the New Jersey Gasoline C-Store Automotive Association (NJGCA), an independent gas station owners group, as saying.

Legislation that would allow self service gas pumping is more likely to become law than similar past measures that failed due to the fact that gasoline retailers now favor self service distribution. In the past, retailers have opposed self service pumping because they felt that it would give oil company owned stations a competitive advantage. In the last decade, most oil companies have gotten out of the retail business due to low profit margins.

Additionally, Jersey gas station owners have been facing penalties for wage violations. Since 2010 the U.S. Department of Labor has recovered back and awarded damages of \$5.5 million for gas pump attendants who were not paid overtime pay when their work week exceed 40 hours.

Risalvato told *The Record* that he expected the 5,000 New Jersey gas pumpers, mostly part-time employees, would be retrained as convenience store clerks.

Jim Bauman, owner of JnR Sunoco in Belford, opposes New Jersey switching to self service pumping. “The only thing it will do is eliminate jobs,” Bauman said in a phone interview, “you’re crazy if you think self service will lower the price of gas. Full service will be 50 cents per gallon more. Self service gas will be restrictive to seniors and handicapped people.”

Craig Copeland, the owner of Craig’s Service Center in Middletown is neutral on the self service bill. “The big box stores like QuickChek and Wawa favor it, but I could go either way. As a service station, gas sales are our way to connect to customer who will hopefully come back for service,” Copeland said, “What I am opposed to is my government telling me how to run my business. Retailers should have a choice to provide full service islands or self service islands and customers should have a choice as well.”

Copeland, who is an active member of NJGCA, insisted that the association was not pushing self service gas pumping, but rather, legislators approached the association about changing the law.

But Risalvato was emphatic that his members are supporting the bill he helped write in a phone interview this afternoon. “We are supporting this bill because 77% of our members said it is time to change the law when we polled them last year. Furthermore, we were the ones who kept self service gas pumps out of New Jersey in the 1980’s when we fought for legislation banning them. Our members, small business owners, were competing with oil company owned stores that wanted to install self service pumps that would have driven many small stations out of business. Now, there are virtually no oil company owned gas stations,” Risalvato said.

Risalvato said that NGCA members estimate that consumers will see a \$.08 to \$.20 per gallon savings at the pump from self service islands and that service will be quicker. “Have you ever pulled into a gas station and seen the pumps blocked off because there were not enough attendants,” he asked rhetorically, “if this legislation passes, you’ll be able to pull up, pump it yourself and get out of there instead of waiting.”

Assemblyman Declan O’Scanlon, the prime sponsor of the bill in the Assembly, said that his legislation is not about taking away a service, but rather about giving both consumers and retailers a choice. “If you’re waiting for a gas station attendant to come back from a break or finish with another customer and you start pumping your own gas, you are committing a crime in New Jersey. That is ridiculous,” O’Scanlon said. “After the three year phase in period while full service islands will be required, retailers are free to continue to offer full service. The only thing that would stop them would be a lack of demand for the service.”