

4 a.m. Last Call Proposal Gets Some L.A. Love

BY DENNIS ROMERO

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File photo by [Siavash Ghadiri Zahrani/Flickr](#)

A proposal that [could allow bars across California to serve your favorite cocktail until 4 a.m.](#) is in the home stretch and will be on the governor's desk by the end of summer if it's successful.

Over the weekend, supporters of the Let Our Communities Adjust Late Night (LOCAL) Act rallied at the Broadway Theater District downtown. A spokesman for Sen. Scott Wiener, the San Francisco legislator behind the proposal, said it was important to drum up support in California's largest city.

"The LOCAL Act recognizes that cities like Los Angeles could benefit — if it chooses to do so — from developing a plan to expand nightlife in neighborhoods like downtown L.A.," Wiener said in a statement. "By taking this nuanced approach to empower — but not require — local communities to extend alcohol sales hours, we can support nightlife in California while also recognizing that there is not a one-size-fits-all solution for each and every city in our great state."

The bill would enable localities like the city of L.A. to extend drinking hours daily, on select holidays and weekends, or not at all. Los Angeles could benefit from later hours when it hosts the 2028 summer Olympics. "I would think that L.A. would want to at least have the flexibility to serve later during the Olympics," Wiener said during a phone interview.

"This bill would enable business owners like myself to provide more jobs and work with local government to provide safe nightlife options," DTLA nightlife pioneer Cedd Moses of 213 Hospitality said in a statement.

But not everyone is toasting the legislation. City Councilman Paul Koretz, whose [district](#) borders Beverly Hills on three sides and includes parts of the West Valley, vehemently opposes the bill. "While we want our bars and restaurants to thrive, no good can come from serving alcohol until 4:00 a.m.," he said via email.

"If this passes we can expect more DUIs, more drunk driving injuries and more alcohol related deaths," he said. "I don't know what the authors of this bill are thinking in that it doesn't seem to provide adequate resources for administration nor for law enforcement."

A spokeswoman for City Council president Herb Wesson said he had yet to take a position. A spokesman for Gov. Jerry Brown said via email: "Our office does not typically weigh in on pending legislation."

Richard Zaldivar, executive director of the nonprofit Wall Las Memorias Project in Los Angeles, said in May that he's opposed because bars and particularly liquor stores disproportionately impact communities of color.

Other opponents include the nonprofit group Alcohol Justice. Its executive director, Bruce Lee Livingston, says the legislation "is not a slam dunk." He suggested that the Assembly would hear from opponents during public testimony before a vote from the full body was expected next month (the deadline for passage is Sept. 15).

A [Senate Rules Committee analysis](#) of the bill concluded it could cost taxpayers \$1 to \$2 million a year, cash that would cover permits for 4 a.m. extensions, regulation and enforcement by the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control. The analysis doesn't mention possible tax revenue increases as a result of two extra hours of business. Livingston and other opponents argue that taxpayers would also foot the bill for greater police and medical responses created as a result of two extra hours of drinking. Bar patrons will just "get drunker," he says.

"This will increase bar times, risk street violence late at night, further the consumption of alcohol and risk more traffic collisions," Livingston says. "This will lead to drunk people hitting the streets at 4:30 and into the commute hours."

Proponents argue, however, that spreading out the flood of drinkers who now hit the streets at 2 a.m. would alleviate pressure on police and public transportation and thin out groups of rowdies. "Whenever you have these caps on hours you have everyone hitting the streets at one particular time instead of filtering out," says [nightlife consultant Eddie Navarette](#). "People rush to the bar to get last call and streets are more dangerous."

The bill is supported by restaurant, hospitality and nightlife groups and even Uber. Opponents include the California College and University Police Chiefs Association, multiple drug and alcohol prevention and treatment groups, and the United Methodist Church.

L.A. Weekly staff writer Dennis Romero has worked on staff at several magazines and newspapers, including the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Los Angeles Times*, where he participated in Pulitzer Prize-winning coverage of the L.A. riots. His work has appeared in *Rolling Stone* online, *the Guardian*, and, as a young stringer, the *New York Times*.