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California Senate Committee Turns Blind Eye To Public Health & Safety, Approves Dangerous 4 a.m. Bar Bill

Government Under the Influence (GUI) Chooses Night Life Over All Life

SACRAMENTO, CA (March 29, 2017) - [Alcohol Justice](#), and the [California Alcohol Policy Alliance \(CAPA\)](#) condemned the California State Senate Governmental Organization (GO) Committee for passing SB 384. The bill could create a dangerous public health and safety policy change in California that will allow bars, restaurants and nightclubs to extend alcohol sales from 2- 4 a.m.

"This is a sad example of GUI – Government Under the Influence of the alcohol and late-night entertainment industry," stated Michael Scippa, Public Affairs Director at Alcohol Justice. *"It will produce more profits for bar, restaurant and nightclub owners, as well as alcohol producers and distributors, while increasing alcohol-related harms and cost at public expense."*

The bill, authored by Senator Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco), was nearly identical to SB 635, a 2013 bill by then Senator Mark Leno of San Francisco. Leno's bill which he stated "...*would require nothing of anybody*" sparked an immediate statewide opposition campaign that stopped the bill dead in its tracks in the same committee that acted very differently today. Wiener's bill now moves to the Senate Appropriations Committee and a Senate floor vote. Opponents are determined to put a final stop to the measure.

"Wiener's "NIGHT LIFE MATTERS" mantra appeared to resonate with committee members, or perhaps it was the special interests he represents, the restaurant associations and alcohol lobby who persuaded committee members to choose profits over public safety," said Richard Zaldivar, Executive Director of The Wall Las Memorias Project and Chair of CAPA. *"In 2013 this committee wisely stopped a 4 a.m. bar bill. Their despicable action today will ultimately put neighborhoods and youth at risk. It clearly says they value alcohol sales more than public health and safety, big business interest over community members' interest".*

According to CDC-reviewed reports, California already suffers \$35 billion in alcohol-related harm every year, with 10,500 lives lost and hundreds of thousands of additional injuries. Local and state governments share of this grisly tab is a whopping \$14.5 billion annually.

"Today's green light on SB 384 disregards the fact that state, city and county public health and safety providers do not have the resources to mitigate the economic and social harms of two more hours of late-night alcohol consumption," stated Bruce Lee Livingston, Executive Director / CEO of Alcohol Justice. *"The local control process that Wiener crows about has historically*

been manipulated by the industry to reduce existing statewide protections while denying local control over raising alcohol taxes to pay for the local harms of excessive alcohol consumption.”

The last time the California alcohol excise tax increased was in 1992 when it was raised by one cent. There is consensus among state public health and safety advocates that no part of the alcohol industry deserves additional competitive advantages until they start paying their fair share of California’s alcohol-related problems. Without state protections, power over health regulations often revert, not to the community, but to wealthy businesses—in this case, Big Alcohol and large entertainment concerns.

“GO Committee members turned a blind eye today to the very real threat of increases in early morning alcohol-related violence, ER visits, impaired driving, and traffic chaos,” Zaldivar added. “At a time when there is so much uncertainty about public funding for public health and healthcare, it is negligent for any elected official to approve something that will undoubtedly cause more harm and more expense.”

Here's how the CA Senate GO Committee voted:

Three Senators said STOP to Senator Wiener’s bill: Gaines, Hueso, and Vidak.

Eight Senators voted yes to the restaurant and liquor industry-sponsored special interest measure: Bradford, Cannella, Dodd, Galgiani, Glazer, Hill, Lara, and Mendoza.

Two Senators were absent: Berryhill and Portantino.

Statewide Opposition includes:

- Alcohol Justice
- Alcohol-Narcotic Education Foundation
- ADAP, Inc.
- Behavioral Health Services, Inc.
- California Alcohol Policy Alliance
- California Council on Alcohol Problems
- Center for Open Recovery
- Eden Youth and Family Center
- Institute for Public Strategies
- FASD Network of Southern CA
- FreeMUNI – SF
- Friday Night Live Partnership
- Koreatown Youth and Community Center
- L.A. Drug & Alcohol Policy Alliance
- Lutheran Office of Public Policy CA
- MFI Recovery Center
- Mountain Communities Family Resource Center
- Partnership for a Positive Pomona
- Paso por Paso, Inc.
- Project SAFER
- Pueblo y Salud
- Reach Out
- San Marcos Prevention Coalition
- San Rafael Alcohol & Drug Coalition

SF DogPAC
SAY San Diego
Saving Lives Drug & Alcohol Coalition
Tarzana Treatment Centers, Inc.
The Wall Las Memorias Project
UCEPP / Social Model Recovery Systems
Women Against Gun Violence
Youth For Justice

And hundreds of individuals who responded to the [Alcohol Justice ACTION ALERT](#).

Click [here](#) for more information on the dangers of extending alcohol hours of service.

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