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California Assembly GO Committee Ignores Frightening 4 A.M. Bar Bill Cost-Benefit Analysis, Passes SB 58

Massive net social cost projected over five years from extending bar times in 10 pilot project cities.

SACRAMENTO, CA (JULY 11, 2019) [Alcohol Justice](#) and [California Alcohol Policy Alliance \(CAPA\)](#) are expressing extreme disappointment today with the members of the California State Assembly Governmental Organization Committee (GO) who voted in favor of SB 58 – the 4 a.m. bar bill. They chose to support marginal economic gains for nightlife businesses and ignore the extra harm and cost incurred if trading hours are extended two hours.

The measure passed out of the GO committee by just one vote. The official tally was 11 ayes, 5 noes, and 5 not voting - a less politically charged way of saying "no". Here's how they voted:

Voting Yes:

Aguiar-Curry (D-Winters), Berman (D-Palo Alto), Bonta (D-Alameda), Brough (R-Dana Point), Daly (D-Anaheim), Eduardo Garcia (D-Coachella), Gipson (D-Carson), Gray (D-Merced), Jones-Sawyer (D-Los Angeles), Low (D-Campbell), Robert Rivas (D-Hollister)

Voting No:

Cooley (D-Rancho Cordova), Lackey (R-Palmdale), Melendez (R-Lake Elsinore), Quirk-Silva (D-Fullerton), Salas (D-Bakersfield)

Not Voting:

Bigelow (R-O'Neals), Cooper (D-Elk Grove), Gallagher (R-Yuba City), Mathis (R-Visalia), Blanca Rubio (D-Baldwin Park)

"I stand firmly against this bill," stated Assemblymember Tom Lackey (r-Palmdale), GO Committee Member, Vice-Chair of the California Assembly Public Safety Committee, and 28-year veteran California Highway Patrol Officer. "The clear outcome of this particular bill will be putting countless lives in danger. Drunk driving increases as the night goes on. Research from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has shown that 54% of all traffic crashes occur because of alcohol impairment after 2 a.m. But there are other factors we must consider. Having spent 18 years as a CHP officer working these hours I have direct knowledge of the tragedy that's associated when alcohol-impaired driving is coupled with the extreme fatigue that we also see in drivers between 2 and 4 a.m. Through this legislation we will extend the hours of most danger and that is terrible, reprehensible, abhorrent, scary and should be denounced. If this bill becomes law, we are going to see countless tragedies for the benefit of financial gain. Shame on us! If money has become that powerful in our society, we really need to re-evaluate what we are doing here."

The simple majority of the committee voted to approve the bill despite receiving new evidence of the massive net social harm the so-called "pilot project" would produce. They ignored the findings in an analysis released Tuesday at press events at Los Angeles City Hall and the state capitol steps in Sacramento, entitled the ["High Cost of the 4 A.M. Bar Bill."](#)

This first of its kind cost-benefit analysis detailing the effects of changing state alcohol policy to allow later last call at bars, restaurants, and clubs was done by the nationally respected, 60 year-old, Oakland-based [Alcohol Research Group \(ARG\)](#), a project of the Public Health Institute. Alcohol Research Group found that should the bill become law the expected social costs generated annually in the City of Los Angeles alone would be **\$88–\$354.5 million**; while the additional revenue would only be **\$36.5–\$146.1 million**. the five-year trial period net social cost of harm in Los Angeles would minimally be **\$266.5 million**. The analysis details the social costs in percentages, including: Lost productivity, illnesses, injuries and accidents - 72%; motor vehicle crashes, early mortality, and crime – 28%.

"While we want our local businesses to thrive, no good can come from serving alcohol until 4 a.m. If this passes, we can expect more DUIs, more drunk driving injuries and more alcohol-related deaths both inside the permitted jurisdictions and their neighboring communities," stated Paul Koretz, Los Angeles City Councilman. *"The harms and costs will spread across all of our road ways and communities forcing all municipalities to pay the price for additional law enforcement, EMT and other costs. From the release of the cost-benefit analysis, we confirm that the revenue losses are much greater than gains to any city that participates."*

The ["High Cost of the 4 A.M. Bar Bill"](#) was a response to the one-sided narrative of revenue to the state, and local nightlife economic development offered by Senator Scott Wiener, the author of SB 58. The bill, Wiener's third attempt in three years to disrupt the protections of a statewide uniform last call, would allow 10 cities in a so-called "pilot program" the ability to extend hours of alcohol on sale until 4 a.m.

"The GO Committee failed the people of California just as SB 58 fails to protect the public health and safety of California residents and visitors by putting private and corporate interests first," stated Veronica De Lara, Co-Chair of California Alcohol Policy Alliance. *"This bill does not acknowledge that increases in alcohol-related harm will occur if hours of service are extended two additional hours. This bill ignores current costs of alcohol-related harm in the state of California and disregards the escalated costs of alcohol related harm to individuals, consumers, families, society and to the government."*

"The author of SB 58 and other bill proponents are fond of declaring that the bill will align California with at least 15 other states where local jurisdictions have the authority to decide alcoholic beverage service hours," stated Michael Scippa, Public Affairs Director at Alcohol Justice. *"This disingenuous argument ignores the fact that some of those local jurisdictions have actually rolled back last call times to reduce alcohol-related harms and costs."*

The ["High Cost of the 4 A.M. Bar Bill"](#) disturbingly documents the worst concerns of Alcohol Justice and CAPA that [public health and safety](#) would be severely compromised if SB 58 becomes law. Advocates for public health and safety throughout are convinced this change in policy will not benefit the community but does benefit private and corporate interests at great public expense.

"It's a shame that the committee has chosen alcohol industry profits over the health and safety of all Californians," stated Ramon Castellblanch, PhD., Professor Emeritus, San Francisco State University. *"What more proof do policy makers require to do the right thing?"*

"The '[High Cost of the 4 A.M. Bar Bill](#)' authors, Drs. Subbaraman and Kerr have shown beyond the shadow of a doubt that SB 58 hurts California economically and puts resident lives at risk," said Carson Benowitz-Fredericks, Research Manager at Alcohol Justice. *"They join dozens of peer-reviewed researchers showing the same thing. It's maddening to see lawmakers refuse to listen to science."*

"Adding together the harms and revenue benefits for pilot programs in 10 cities statewide yields a very conservative estimate that over the five-year life of SB 58 California residents and government will suffer \$701.2 million in net social cost. This is with a conservative estimate of 5% of bars, restaurants and nightclubs in the ten pilot project cities moving to 4 a.m. The true

cost of SB 58 is astronomical and the bill must be defeated," said Brenda Villanueva, Co-Chair of Los Angeles Drug and Alcohol Policy Alliance (LADAPA).

Los Angeles City Councilwoman Nury Martinez, added, "This bill ignores thousands of lives lost and families torn apart by drunk driving in order to squeeze a few more dollars out of our neighborhoods. There may be supporters of SB 58 in Sacramento, but I am not one of them. I applaud Alcohol Justice and Councilmember Paul Koretz for standing up for our communities and telling the truth about this terrible bill."

"Thanks to this report, we can put real numbers to SB 58's public health and safety impact," said Sarah Blanche, Co-Chair, Los Angeles Drug and Alcohol Policy Association (L.A.DAPA). *"If the bill passes, the report projects there will be an additional 3,200 DUIs in the City of Los Angeles alone. Over 94 thousand additional ambulance trips will be necessary every year. This kind of cost is unacceptable. SB 58 is dangerous for L.A. and for the rest of California."*

"Why allow two more hours of on-site alcohol use if we already know the consequences? Pretending this policy is good for our community is Misleading. Unfair. Unjust," stated LGBTQ+ Caucus Member Maurina Cintron. *"The data shows that the LGBTQ community suffers disproportionately from alcohol abuse. Help me understand why policy would be written without any health concerns in mind. Why should we continue allowing Big Alcohol to prey on our vulnerable communities? This policy isn't something anyone in the LGBTQ or straight communities will get a chance to vote on, so we need our local representatives to speak up on our behalf. "*

"I am a mother and grandmother from Koreatown, Westlake and recently a resident of Pico Union," stated Miriam Castro, Promotora. *"As a pedestrian, those of us who walk are exposed to everything on these streets. I think that the social costs and loss of productivity from illnesses, vehicle crashes, early mortality and crime need to be acknowledged. The social cost of SB 58 will be more than the benefits. The ['High Cost of the 4 A.M. Bar Bill'](#) needs to be carefully considered by our lawmakers. It clearly demonstrates that over the 5 year pilot project period of extended alcohol sales until 4 a.m., the costs could be between \$266 million and \$1 billion in Los Angeles alone!"*

"As we sadly expected, Senator Wiener disrespected every argument in favor of public health and safety in the Assembly GO Committee hearing," stated Sonny Skyhawk, actor, producer, citizen of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, founder of the American Indians in Film and Television, and Alcohol Justice Board Member. *"He discounted and denied the new cost-benefit analysis, and all the peer-reviewed science that exists. He did this to whitewash the extension of on-sale hours as something beneficial to his precious "nightlife". To that we continue to say all life is precious."*

According to Centers for Disease Control-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.

"With this disappointing committee vote, the state is moving closer to creating a very dangerous policy change," said Richard Zaldivar, founder and CEO of the Wall Las Memorias Project, co-chair of CAPA, spokesperson for the LGBTQ+ Caucus, and an Alcohol Justice Board Member. *"This change will economically benefit alcohol sellers in the epicenter of nightlife entertainment districts while radiating increased harms and costs to surrounding communities including many people of color, the economically disadvantaged, and those identifying as LGBTQ."*

"SB 58, like last year's SB 905, and 2017's SB 384, is a clumsy attempt by Senator Scott Wiener to pull the wool over the eyes of the legislature by pitching this as a so-called 'pilot project'. But don't be fooled," stated Bruce Lee Livingston, Executive Director / CEO of Alcohol Justice. *"SB 58 is nothing more than another greedy grab for more profits by promoting binge*

