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Governor Newsom Strongly Urged to VETO AB 3206

Dangerous 4 a.m. Bar Bill Experiment at Intuit Dome in Inglewood Places Profits Over Public Health & Safety

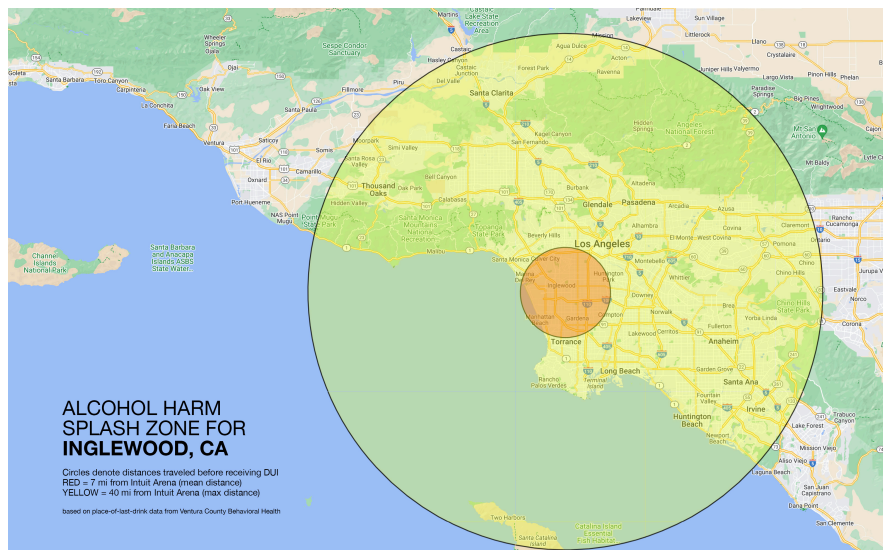
SAN RAFAEL, CA (August 26, 2024) – [Alcohol Justice](#) and the [California Alcohol Policy Alliance \(CAPA\)](#) are calling upon California Governor Gavin Newsom to VETO AB 3206. The dangerous “district” bill barely passed through the legislature and seeks to destroy the protections of uniform last call in the state and expose the entire Los Angeles area to greater risk.

[AB 3206](#), introduced by [Assemblymember Tina McKinnor](#) (D-Inglewood), will allow the VIP lounge at billionaire Steve Ballmer’s [Intuit Dome Arena](#) to keep selling alcohol long after a L.A. Clipper’s basketball game or other event has ended – and long after the legal closing time of any other bar in the state.

“If the Governor does not veto this bill, not only will it create a very real threat to health and safety throughout the L.A. area, but it will set a horrible public policy precedent for the entire state,” said Cruz Avila, Executive Director of Alcohol Justice. *“There will surely be a flood of copycat district bills to follow from other legislators being pressured by billionaire arena owners and alcohol conglomerates in their districts demanding the same dangerous privilege.”*

Just one more hour of alcohol sales in one venue will disrupt the protections of California’s uniform, statewide 2 a.m. last call. It will expose surrounding communities—in fact the entire L.A. basin—to increased harms and costs while only the alcohol sellers in the epicenter of Ballmer’s dome see the marginal economic benefits.

In 2018, the evidence for increased harms was presented to the legislature in an Alcohol Justice/CAPA report entitled [The Late Night Threat, Science, Harms, and Costs of Extending Bar Service Hours](#). It highlighted the existing data supporting how the acute effects of extending alcohol sales would spread to “Splash Zones” surrounding various cities in California.



More recently, another analysis was released by the respected Oakland-based [Alcohol Resource Group \(ARG\)](#), a project of the Public Health Institute. *"The High Cost of the 4 A.M. Bar Bill"* was a first-of-its-kind cost-benefit analysis detailing the effects of changing state alcohol policy to allow later last calls at bars, restaurants, and clubs. The analysis disturbingly documented the worst concerns of Alcohol Justice and CAPA that public health and safety would be severely compromised if California's 2 a.m. last call fell.

There was considerable and widespread opposition to AB 3206 throughout the state and in the Legislature:

Jeanne Shimatsu, Prevention Director at the [Asian American Drug Abuse Program \(AADAP\)](#) stated:

"Extending the bar service from 2 a.m. to 4 a.m. to an exclusive group of consumers does not minimize the collateral impact by those inebriated drivers once they leave the entertainment site and enter the public zone. The host city and neighboring splash zone cities will feel the cost burden for material damage and, worse, the ripple effect to families and communities should it result in the loss of life."

"AB 3206 is a reckless piece of legislation that prioritizes profits over public safety. Allowing the Intuit Dome to extend alcohol sales until 4 a.m. sets a dangerous precedent for the entire state. The data is clear: extending last call leads to more drunk driving incidents, more accidents, and more lives lost. One life lost is simply too many," said [Assemblymember Tom Lackey](#) (R-Palmdale), a retired California Highway Patrol Sergeant.

During the Senate floor debate on the bill [Senator Kelly Seyarto](#) (R-Murrieta), stated: *"Members, I oppose this bill. This is actually a very exclusive club in the Intuit Dome that's being built right now that will only allow exclusive members to drink until 4 o'clock in the morning, then we'll turn them loose on the streets of the Inglewood, which is a city that I used to serve. That is the last thing that city needs. If they think that opening venues and having drinking until 4 in the morning is good for just exclusive groups, then it should be for everyone. My contention is that it isn't good for anyone. I encourage a no vote."*

Even with considerable opposition, AB 3206 advanced, but by only one vote in the Senate. It will soon go to the Governor, who has until the end of September to sign it, VETO it, or allow it to become law without his signature. [Advocates for public health and safety are strongly urging Governor Newsom to veto the dangerous policy change.](#)

How the California Senate voted on AB 3206:

Voted Yes: Senators Allen, Archuleta, Ashby, Atkins, Becker, Bradford, Caballero, Cortese, Dodd, Durazo, Gonzalez, Hurtado, McGuire, Padilla, Portantino, Roth, Skinner, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Umberg, Wiener.

Voted No: Senators Alvarado-Gil, Blakespear, Dahle, Eggman, Grove, Menjivar, Min, Newman, Nguyen, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Seyarto, Wahab, Wilk.

Did not vote: Senators Glazer, Jones, Laird, Limón, Rubio.

"We sincerely appreciate the wise decisions of those legislators who voted no or stayed off AB 3206," said Michael Scippa, Public Affairs Director at Alcohol Justice. *"But for those Senators who chose to bend the knee to Steve Ballmer and his well-heeled lobbyist by voting yes on the bill, the costly and deadly consequences for the health and well-being of Los Angeles residents and visitors will be on your conscience."*

"In March of this year, the passage of [California Proposition 1](#) opened a stream of revenue to address mental health issues and improve services," stated Raul Verdugo on behalf of the California Alcohol Policy Alliance (CAPA). *"But the paradox remains — when state legislators pass bills like AB 3206, they operate off the pretense that alcohol plays no part and or no correlation to mental health issues and the crisis we face with the houseless on the streets. State legislation like this will only continue to undermine state health efforts to improve mental health and substance use conditions and disease, ultimately increasing the deficit California will continue to suffer with little hope for a better tomorrow."*

"The hazards of impulsively fooling around with last call times have been called out by every major public health voice. APHA, the Surgeon General, the WHO, the CDC-affiliated Community Guide—all of them agree, you can't do it without putting lives at risk," said Carson Benowitz-Fredericks, Research Director at Alcohol Justice. *"There are many legislators who know to follow the science, and this squeaked through the state senate by one vote. Now it comes down to the governor who coined the phrase, 'Follow the science,' to heed to his own advice and kill this bill."*

FACTS

- AB 3206 will allow extending alcohol sales to 4 a.m. in the VIP lounge at Steve Ballmer’s Intuit Dome Arena where his L.A. Clippers will play.
- The risks of extended service times apply to VIPs the same as they do to anyone else, POSSIBLY MORE—consumption tends to increase with wealth.
- For a working-class city well within Los Angeles’s orbit, that means wealthy partiers getting in their cars at daybreak will be putting the morning shift’s lives at risk.
- These “VIP” areas are notoriously devoid of accountability and incentivized to cover up violence, sexual assault, and injury, much more so than bars open to the public.
- Keeping consumption confined in a “VIP” area creates a space even more devoid of accountability than most late-night bars and clubs.
- AB 3206 trades the public health and safety of the greater Los Angeles area for enhancing a single, massive Inglewood-based corporation’s profits.
- AB 3206 will subsidize and reward nightlife alcohol-sellers at taxpayer expense.
- AB 3206 concentrates profit while spreading risk, disruption, and harm.
- Aside from the risk of assault, accidental injury, and motor vehicle crashes, drinking until 4 a.m. creates conditions where exhaustion plus alcohol becomes more deadly than either would be alone.
- AB 3206 would create a slippery slope to strip away statewide uniform protections of a 2 a.m. last call.
- A later last call does not fill any need expressed by any reasonable adult, and granting this will make every major venue with a “VIP” room demand the same.
- AB 3206 disregards 40 years of peer-reviewed, public health research on the dangers of extending last calls.
- AB 3206 would cost cities and towns in the Inglewood/L.A. “Splash Zones” millions in harm, disruption, and additional police and ambulance service.
- Alcohol-related deaths are out of control in California, climbing 70% in only six years, from 10,800 deaths annually in 2015 to 19,335 in 2021. (Esser et al. 2020; Jiménez, Demeter & Pinsker 2023)
- Alcohol-related driving fatalities also continue to rise, from 966 in 2019 to 1370 in 2021. (California Office of Traffic Safety 2023)
- AB 3206 ignores \$35 billion in annual alcohol-related harm in California.

CAPA Member Organizations

- Alcohol Justice
- Alcohol-Narcotics Education Foundation of California
- ADAPP, Inc.
- ADAPT San Ramon Valley
- Bay Area Community Resources
- Behavioral Health Services, Inc.
- CA Council on Alcohol Problems
- CASA for Safe & Healthy Neighborhoods
- Center for Human Development
- Center for Open Recovery
- Eden Youth & Family Center
- Institute for Public Strategies
- FASD Network of Southern CA
- FreeMUNI – SF
- Friday Night Live Partnership
- Koreatown Youth & Community Center
- Laytonville Healthy Start
- L.A. County Friday Night Live
- L.A. Drug & Alcohol Policy Alliance
- L.A. County Office of Education
- Lutheran Office of Public Policy – CA
- MFI Recovery Center
- Mountain Communities Family Resource Center
- National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse
- 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
- South Orange County Coalition
- Tarzana Treatment Centers, Inc.
- The Wall Las Memorias Project
- UCEPP Social Model Recovery Systems
- Women Against Gun Violence
- Youth For Justice

TAKE ACTION to STOP AB 3206 <https://www.votervoices.net/AlcoholJustice/Campaigns/115851/Respond>

Or Text PUBLICSAFETY to 50457

For More Information go to: <https://alcoholjustice.org/projects/california-alcohol-policy-alliance/> or <https://alcoholjustice.org/>



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