



Portfolio Media, Inc. | 111 West 19th Street, 5th floor | New York, NY 10011 | www.law360.com
Phone: +1 646 783 7100 | Fax: +1 646 783 7161 | customerservice@law360.com

Calif. Gov. Vetoes Late Night Bar Bill

By **Lauren Berg**

Law360 (October 1, 2018, 8:02 PM EDT) -- California Gov. Jerry Brown rejected a bill Friday that would have allowed bars and restaurants in Los Angeles, San Francisco and several other cities to extend alcohol service from 2 to 4 a.m.

Despite the California legislature approving the bill in August, Brown vetoed Senate Bill 905, saying that those two extra hours of drinking would mean more drunk drivers on the roads of Los Angeles, San Francisco, West Hollywood, Oakland, Long Beach, Sacramento, Palm Springs, Coachella and Cathedral City.

"California's laws regulating late night drinking have been on the books since 1913," Brown wrote in his veto message. "I believe we have enough mischief from midnight to 2 without adding two more hours of mayhem."

The bill was introduced by Sen. Scott Wiener, D-San Francisco, who said in a statement Friday that California's "one-size-fits-all" closing time for bars, restaurants and nightclubs does not make sense. The nightlife in Los Angeles or San Francisco, he said, cannot be compared to that of a small city.

"Our 2 a.m. blanket closing time is a bad leftover policy from over a century ago," Wiener said. "Times have changed, and our policies should as well."

SB 905 was designed not as a requirement but as an option that would allow businesses to decide for themselves when to close, Wiener said. Such a policy should be embraced, Wiener said, because it would support the nightlife industry that brings in "billions of revenue" to the state and employs "millions of people."

The bill would have been a pilot program in those nine cities for five years beginning in 2021.

Alcohol Justice, an alcohol industry watchdog that promotes evidence-based public health policies, stood firmly against the bill from the beginning and the group applauded Brown's decision to veto the final bill. The group said in a statement Friday that later bar times would mean more emergency room trips and more street violence and brawls.

The group, along with the California Alcohol Policy Alliance, also presented a report to Brown and the legislature with evidence that showed the effects of the extended alcohol service in those nine cities would spread to "splash zones" outside of their city limits, creating more problems, according to Friday's statement.

"Binge drinking is rampant in the United States, as was evidenced this week in the Senate Judiciary Committee hearings regarding Judge Brett Kavanaugh," Bruce Lee Livingston, executive director of Alcohol Justice, said. "One in six Americans have binge drinking problems according to the CDC, and later bar times will only accelerate that problem."

Following Brown's veto, Wiener took to Twitter on Friday and said he was "disappointed," but would reintroduce the bill next year.

A spokesperson for Wiener and a representative for Alcohol Justice did not immediately respond to requests for comment Monday.

--Editing by Pamela Wilkinson.

All Content © 2003-2018, Portfolio Media, Inc.