

Keep California Bars Open Later: State Assembly Rejects Bill

The so-called "Last Call Bill," otherwise known as SB 58, was rejected by the California State Assembly.

By [Toni McAllister, Patch Staff](#)

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The bill had called for allowing 10 cities to participate in a five-year pilot program whereby bars within city limits could stay open later than the current 2 a.m. closing. (Shutterstock)

CALIFORNIA — A bill that would have extended the hours bars could serve alcohol to patrons died in the California State Assembly late last week.

The so-called "Last Call Bill," otherwise known as [SB 58](#), had faced little pushback this year in the state capitol since being introduced Dec. 17 by Sen. Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco). On Friday, however, 35 assembly members voted down the bill, compared to 29 yes votes. Fifteen lawmakers did not cast a vote.

The bill had called for allowing 10 cities to participate in [a five-year pilot program](#) whereby bars within city limits could stay open later than the current 2 a.m. closing. The cities would have the option of participating — or not. Existing state laws prohibit the sale of alcohol between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m.

"This is a huge victory," said Los Angeles City Councilmember Paul Koretz, who last month helped pass a resolution in his city that opposed the bill. "The California Assembly chose the safety of its residents over profits for alcohol-related businesses. I am proud of their actions and of the coalition that fought to oppose this dangerous bill."

In Alameda County, which encompassed two of the so-called pilot cities — San Francisco and Oakland — there was vocal opposition from Supervisor Nate Miley, whose District 4 includes Oakland. On Aug. 16, [he penned an op-ed](#) strongly opposing the bill.

Friday's failed passage marks Wiener's third unsuccessful attempt to allow California bars to stay open later. He introduced legislation proposing to extend bar hours back in 2017 with SB 384, which was defeated, and then again in 2018 with SB 905, which made it to then Gov. Jerry Brown's desk, where it was vetoed.

After Friday's news, Bruce Lee Livingston, executive director/CEO of Alcohol Justice, said, "This dangerous idea of extending bar hours should not be resurrected by Scott Wiener for the fourth time next year — the assembly will not allow it any longer." Alcohol Justice has repeatedly battled against Wiener's attempts.

But the San Francisco lawmaker had support for a law change from groups like San Francisco Travel, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, the West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, the San Francisco Bar Alliance, the California Music and Culture Association, the Valley Industry and Commerce Association, CalTravel, Lyft and Uber.

Wiener has argued that cities should have flexibility when it comes to nightlife, and that his legislation supported culture, music, tourism, small businesses and middle class jobs.

"California's current rigid, outdated, blanket 2 a.m. closing time no longer makes sense," Wiener said earlier this year. "Nightlife is so important for the culture and economy of our cities. Our entire state will benefit from allowing cities the flexibility to extend their nightlife if they see fit."