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Senator Wiener Hurls 4 a.m. Bar Bill at California Again

Governor Brown Called It “Mischief” and “Mayhem”

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (December 18, 2018) - [California Alcohol Policy Alliance \(CAPA\)](#), and [Alcohol Justice](#) are outraged by Senator Scott Wiener’s (D-San Francisco) tone-deaf, third, Quixotic attempt to push the legislature in the direction of increasing profits for the nightlife industry at public expense. SB 58, introduced by Wiener on December 17, 2018, is nearly identical to his SB 905 that was vetoed in September by Governor Brown who stated: *"I believe we have enough mischief from midnight to 2 without adding two more hours of mayhem."*

"Like climate change deniers, Senator Wiener continues to deny dozens of peer-reviewed studies that show two more hours of alcohol sales will nearly double alcohol-related violence, crime, police calls, and emergency department visits," stated Bruce Lee Livingston, Executive Director / CEO at Alcohol Justice. *"Later bar times benefit business owners while the cost of cleaning up spilled blood and splattered brains after 4 a.m. will come from public resources."*

The evidence for increased harms was presented to the legislature and the Governor earlier this year in a joint CAPA/Alcohol Justice 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 the cities in Wiener’s poorly constructed “pilot project.” Those nine cities, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sacramento, Oakland, Long Beach, West Hollywood, Palm Springs, Cathedral City, and Coachella, and the Splash Zones surrounding them, are once again back in the bullseye.

"This year, Senator Wiener made a mockery of scientific research and the legislative process by mislabeling SB 905 a ‘pilot project,’" said Veronica De Lara, MPA, Program Director, Pueblo y Salud, and Co-Chair of CAPA. *"Virtually the entire state would have been exposed to additional alcohol-related harms if Governor Brown had not vetoed the bill. Now, with SB 58, Wiener continues to deny the research while mocking Governor Brown and the California Highway Patrol by tweeting..."* *No it won’t. It’ll lead to great nightlife."*

California currently suffers over 10,500 alcohol-related deaths and \$35 billion in costs annually. [The California Office of Traffic Safety](#) has reported that fatal DUI is a chronic, worsening problem for the state. Between 2014 and 2016, alcohol-related crash deaths rose 21%. That number would have only gone up with two additional hours of alcohol consumption. The only benefits of selling alcohol between 2 and 4 a.m. would be greater profits to bar, restaurant, and club owners; while the public and all levels of government would be forced to continue to cover the costs of cleaning up the mess that follows.

"Governor Brown's veto of SB 905 in September was a victory for the people of California over the profit driven alcohol industry that cares more about money than the devastating harm caused by the use and abuse of alcohol," stated Rev. James B. Butler, Executive Director, California Council on Alcohol Problems. "Senator Wiener's re-introduced 4 a.m. bar bill is an insult to Brown and all who oppose placing nightlife industry profits above the interests of the people. We are re-committed to defeating it."

The unintended consequences of extending alcohol last call include:

- quality of life deterioration for adjacent neighborhoods
- drinkers driving from areas where bars close earlier to bars with later last calls
- late night drinkers sharing the road with early morning commuters
- increased DUI accidents and fatalities
- limited budgets and personnel to deal effectively with the extra service calls

"The Journal of the American Medical Association found that over 90% of domestic abusers were abusing alcohol not just regularly but at the time of the incident," stated Margot Bennett, Executive Director Women Against Gun Violence. "To protect families and communities at large, we must not only provide reasonable regulation of guns but also provide reasonable regulation of alcohol that includes restrictions on the hours it can be sold. A 4 a.m. last call is far from reasonable and will only push incidents of alcohol-related violence further into the early morning hours."

"The idea of bringing forward yet another bill to allow bars in California to serve alcohol until 4 a.m., especially in light of all the recent claims of sexual assault is truly unconscionable," said Patty Hoyt, Alcohol Policy Coordinator at Discovery Counseling Center. "Serving alcohol until 4 a.m. will only lead to 'great nightlife'? No, it won't. It'll increase opportunities for unwanted advances and possible assaults as it increases the amount of time people can consume and end up intoxicated."

Wiener's third attempt at passing a 4 a.m. bar bill in 2019, will, like his first two attempts, strip away the standard protections of a normal 2 a.m. closing time. He will once again draw the ire of local health, prevention, and recovery groups as well as MADD and law enforcement organizations. Yet because he seems only interested in guaranteeing more profits for his nightlife friends, he can expect a steadily growing, well-organized chorus of opposition determined to call out and stop the damage the state will suffer if SB 58 becomes law.

"The cost of extending hours for California's 'nightlife industry' is not factored into Wiener's myopic 6-billion-dollar economy: drunk driving, sexual assault or damage to personal property impact lives and public costs but not bar owners' balance sheets," said Richard Zaldivar, Executive Director / Founder, The Wall Las Memorias, a community health and wellness organization dedicated to serving Latino, LGBTQ and other underserved populations. "Senator Wiener should know that CAPA, a diverse statewide coalition, is deeply committed to defeating his bill and maintaining the statewide protection of a uniform 2 a.m. last call."

For More Information go to: www.AlcoholJustice.org or www.alcoholpolicyalliance.org/

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