

California legislators vote against 3am last orders

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A bill that would have allowed bars in 10 cities across California to extend their opening hours from 2am to 3am has been rejected by lawmakers.



SB 58 would have allowed bars in San Francisco to serve alcohol until 3am

SB 58, which would have allowed bars in San Francisco, Oakland, Sacramento, Los Angeles, West Hollywood, Long Beach, Cathedral City, Coachella, Palm Springs and Fresno to open until 3am, was defeated by 35 votes to 29. Fifteen members of the legislature did not vote.

The bill was brought forward by US senator Scott Wiener and initially called for opening hours to be extended until 4am, but this was altered in August.

“This is a huge victory,” said Los Angeles City Council member Paul Koretz.

“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.”

Industry watchdog Alcohol Justice has welcomed the defeat, labelling the proposed change to licensing regulations “dangerous”.

“The State Assembly spoke early this morning and the people of California won by defeating SB 58,” said Richard Zaldivar, executive director and founder of The Wall-Las Memorias Project and co-chair of California Alcohol Policy Alliance.

“We stopped the attempt by the nightlife lobby to harm our communities. Thank you to the members of the legislature that voted for people over special interests.”

Critics of the bill said it would cost the state at least US\$3-4 million per year to administer and mitigate the harm it may cause. They also argued that it disregarded 40 years of peer-reviewed, public health research on the dangers of extending last call.

Wiener had argued that the implementation of SB 58 would add “vibrancy” and help small businesses.