

Boulevard Sentinel



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Teeing Up Another Vote to Keep Bars Open Later

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By T. A. Hendrickson

Another effort to keep bars open later is taking shape in the California state Assembly.

Last year, a majority of Assemblymembers said “no” to a bill, Senate Bill 58, that would have let Los Angeles and nine other California cities keep bars open until 3 a.m. versus 2 a.m. currently. But the losing side has not given up. A “motion to reconsider” SB 58, filed by Assemblymember Miguel Santiago (D-downtown L.A.), will allow one more vote on the measure in the Assembly in 2020. Legislators who support the bill have argued that a later last call would boost local economies by increasing employment, consumer spending and tax revenues at nightlife venues.

With another vote looming, opponents of SB 58 have renewed their efforts to block later bar hours. Their argument is that later hours would lead to more drinking and more alcohol-related injury, crime and death.



Richard Zaldivar, at left, celebrated the defeat of SB 58 last year with supporters of Alcohol Justice, an alcohol industry watchdog.

Prominent among the opponents is Richard Zaldivar, a leader in the LGBTQ community in Northeast L.A. Zaldivar founded and runs The Wall-Las Memorias, a local nonprofit that advocates for better health for Latino, gay and other underserved populations. He also serves on the board of Alcohol Justice, an alcohol industry watchdog that is a member of the California Alcohol Policy Alliance (CAPA), a coalition of alcohol-abuse prevention groups.

In January, Zaldivar emceed a CAPA event in the Capitol in Sacramento to honor six Assemblymembers (three Democrats and three Republicans) who voted “no” on SB 58 last year. Asked by the Boulevard Sentinel what motivated him to lead the fight against SB 58, Zaldivar replied: “This legislation could cause tremendous harm to my community.”

In 2018, a bill to set California’s bar closing time at 4 a.m. passed the state legislature but was vetoed by then Governor Jerry Brown. In 2019, SB 58 passed the state Senate before it was defeated in the Assembly. NELA’s State Senator Mary Elena Durazo abstained from voting on SB 58 in 2019; NELA’s Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo, a co-author of SB 58, voted “yes.”