



Please **OPPOSE HB25-1237** Soft Closing of Alcohol Beverage Establishments

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Colorado *opposes* HB 1237. While this bill claims to create a soft closing for bars, the reality is that it **extends drinking hours until 3AM**. With more deaths and injuries on our roads and fewer law enforcement officers to keep us safe, *this bill is a risk that Colorado can't afford to take*.

Deaths on our roads have surged. Beginning in 2020, our state saw a historic surge in lives taken by impaired drivers on our Colorado roads *with the highest annual totals since 2001*. In 2023, 227 lives were taken by impaired drivers on Colorado roads (CDOT Fatal Crash Data). This means 29% more people were killed in 2023 than in 2019, before the pandemic.

- Research shows this bill will increase drunk driving.
- Drunk drivers don't stop at city or county lines, meaning areas that don't extend drinking hours will still see an increase in drunk driving if nearby areas do.
- The current 2AM statewide cut-off time for alcohol sales helps prevent barhopping in search of one last drink, reducing drunk driving.
- In New York, counties with longer drinking hours (1AM–4AM) saw increased drunk driving and DUI charges (Schofield & Denson, 2013).
- When San Marcos, TX extended drinking hours, it led to more law enforcement service calls, public intoxication, and drunk driving (Chamlin & Scott, 2014).

227

Impaired driving
deaths in 2023

29%

Impaired driving
deaths up 29% in
CO since 2019

6th

CO ranks sixth
worst in US for
alcohol deaths

There aren't enough law enforcement officers to keep our roads safe.

While our state's population has increased by 12%, the number of police officers per capita in Colorado has **DECREASED** by 3.5% (2013-2023 FBI Uniform Crime Reporting). Colorado lags behind the national average of police officers per capita by almost 9%.

Extending drinking hours will NOT make us safer. Supporters of this bill have argued that extending bar hours would increase public safety. To be clear, research indicates the opposite—*extending hours will increase crime*. In New York, *every 1-hour increase in drinking hours increased violent crimes*, as well as aggravated assaults and non-gun violence (Schofield & Denson, 2013).

For more information, please contact:

Amy Attwood, Attwood Public Affairs • (720) 840-4912 • amy@amyattwood.com

Fran Lanzer, Lanzer Strategies • (720) 295-3411 • fran@lanzerstrategies.com

A review of 49 studies from 8 countries found that increasing drinking hours for bars **increased alcohol use and related harms such as violence** (Stockwell & Chikritzhs, 2009). In Baltimore, reducing—*not extending*—hours of alcohol sales was associated with a 29% annual decrease in violent crime and a 48% annual decrease in homicide (Rosen, Trangenstein, Fullem, et al, 2024)

Extending hours will hurt the Colorado Economy. A 2018 cost-benefit analysis of bar hours in Los Angeles found the costs of moving from 2AM to 4AM would exceed benefits by a 2.3 to 1 ratio (Subbaraman & Kerr, 2019). The report estimated that if just 20% of late-night bars moved to 4AM **it would cost the public \$1.066 billion over five years**. In New York, the estimated cost from having licensed premises open after 1 a.m. was \$194 million (Schofield & Denson, 2013).

Alcohol deaths are reaching alarming rates. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, Colorado is *the 6th worst state in the nation* at 26.5 alcohol-induced deaths per 100,000 people in 2021. Excessive alcohol use costs each Coloradan \$1,005 per year—4th highest in the US (CDC).

A broad coalition opposes this bill. In addition to MADD Colorado, several law enforcement agencies, safety advocates, victim organizations and local businesses oppose HB 1237:

- 10th Judicial District Attorney's Office (Pueblo County)
- 17th Judicial District Attorney's Office (Adams & Broomfield Counties)
- 18th Judicial District Attorney's Office (Arapahoe County)
- 20th Judicial District Attorney's Office (Boulder County)
- 23rd Judicial District Attorney's Office (Douglas, Elbert & Lincoln Counties)
- AAA Colorado
- Adams County Health Department
- City of Colorado Springs
- Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police
- Colorado Counties, Inc.
- Colorado District Attorneys' Council
- Colorado Fraternal Order of Police
- Colorado Nurses Association
- Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance
- Colorado Providers Association
- Colorado Society of Addiction Medicine
- Colorado Springs Police Department
- Colorado State Patrol Association
- County Sheriffs of Colorado
- Douglas County Sheriff's Office
- Healthier Colorado
- Larimer Place RNO
- No DUI NoCo
- Overlook at Park Hill RNO
- Rocky Mountain Victim Law Center
- *Denver bars, restaurants & businesses:*
 - Baker Wine & Spirits
 - Canopy
 - The Capital Grille
 - CD's Wings
 - Colorado Valets
 - Corridor 44
 - Create Kitchen & Bar
 - The Front Porch
 - Illegal Pete's
 - The L
 - Lucina Eatery & Bar
 - My Boy Tony
 - The Patio at Sloans
 - Roosevelt
 - Urban Security and Protection Group
 - Xiquita Restaurante y Bar