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**Colorado Bars, Mothers Against Drunk Driving Team Up to Fight Bar Hours Bill**

*Law enforcement, safety advocates, and victim groups join bars and restaurants to oppose House Bill 1237 extending bar hours*

DENVER, CO, March 3, 2025 – A broad coalition of law enforcement organizations, safety advocates, public health groups, crime victim organizations, and bars and restaurants is joining Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Colorado to oppose House Bill 1237 which would allow cities to extend drinking at bars until 3AM. The bill is sponsored by Representatives Lindstedt and Mabrey and scheduled to be heard by the House Business Affairs & Labor Committee on March 6 at 1:30PM.

“With more deaths and injuries on our roads and fewer law enforcement officers across our state, this bill is a risk that Colorado can’t afford to take,” said Rebecca Green, MADD Colorado Executive Director. “Clearly a lot of people recognize how dangerous this change could be. We’re joining together to ask our state legislators to vote no on House Bill 1237.”

In recent years, deaths on Colorado roads have surged. Beginning in 2020, our state saw a historic surge in lives taken by impaired drivers on Colorado roads with several of the highest annual totals since 2001. In 2023, 227 lives were taken by impaired drivers on Colorado roads (CDOT Fatal Crash Data).

Research shows that extending drinking hours will increase drunk driving. A study of New York drunk driving data found that “longer business hours for alcohol-serving establishments, including those additional hours available in adjacent counties, were significantly associated with higher rates of misdemeanor-level 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).

“Sadly, Adams County is one of the leading counties in Colorado for impaired driving fatalities,” said 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Attorney Brian Mason, one of many law enforcement partners opposing the bill. “We already see so many tragedies on our roads and we might see more if a nearby city extends drinking hours at bars. We’re working to make our communities safer and House Bill 1237 would take us in the wrong direction.”

Several bars and restaurants have joined the effort to oppose the bill. “My biggest concern is for the health and safety of my staff. Extended hours would mean they would not get home until nearly 5:00AM after doing all of the duties that go with closing a bar,” said Isaac Leon, Managing Partner of The Front Porch. “Our bartenders didn’t sign up for this. I’m asking legislators to help my staff live a safe, sustainable life that helps our city thrive.”

The current 2AM statewide cut-off time for alcohol sales helps prevent barhopping in search of one last drink, reducing 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.

Some 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). 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).

Cities seeking to address crime around bars have found success by reducing—*not extending*—bar hours. An analysis of 13 bars/taverns in Baltimore, Maryland, found that reducing hours of alcohol sales was associated with a 29% annual decrease in all violent crime with homicide and assault rates dropping by 48% and 31% annually, respectively (Rosen, Trangenstein, Fullem, et al, 2024).

Overall alcohol-related deaths are reaching alarming rates in our state. 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).

Extending hours will likely 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).

“While there’s a belief that keeping bars open an extra hour would generate more revenue, this has never been the case. If bars are open later, our customers will come out later so they can stay out later,” Isaac Leon added. “Every year when daylight savings time ends in November (fall back), each bar is given an extra hour. I have run my bars for over twenty years. Not once have we ever generated additional revenue.”

Several law enforcement agencies, safety advocates, victim organizations and local businesses have signed on to MADD Colorado’s factsheet to 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 Organization for Victim Assistance
- Colorado Springs Police Department
- Colorado State Patrol Association
- County Sheriffs of Colorado
- Douglas County Sheriff’s Office
- Healthier Colorado
- Rocky Mountain Victim Law Center
- Denver lounges, bars & restaurants:
  - Canopy
  - The Capital Grille
  - Corridor 44
  - The Front Porch
  - Illegal Pete’s
  - Lucina Eatery & Bar
  - My Boy Tony
  - The Patio
  - Roosevelt
  - Xiquita Restaurante y Bar

House Bill 1237 is scheduled to be voted on by the House Business Affairs & Labor Committee on March 6, 2025. Concerned citizens can take action now by calling and emailing their Colorado legislators today.

Here are two options for taking action:

1) Email Colorado Legislators with the MADD Action Alert on HB 1237:

<https://secure.madd.org/page/80030/action/1?ea.url.id=3361300&forwarded=true>

2) Look up your Colorado Legislators to call them directly:

<https://leg.colorado.gov/find-my-legislator>

In 2023, 227 lives were taken by impaired drivers on Colorado roads (CDOT Fatal Crash Data). This means 29% more people were killed on our roads last year than in 2019, the year before the pandemic.

House Bill 1237 could make things worse on Colorado roads. ***MADD urges legislators to vote no on this dangerous bill.***

### **About MADD**

Mothers Against Drunk Driving® (MADD) is a national nonprofit leading the movement to end impaired driving for good. Since 1980, MADD has helped reduce drunk driving deaths in America by nearly 40%, saved more than 475,000 lives, and served more than one million victims and survivors. The organization is committed to leading prevention efforts with young adults, collaborating with law enforcement to keep our roads safe from impaired drivers, as well as advocating for stricter sentencing and stronger laws, including the HALT Act that mandates anti-drunk driving technology in every new car. MADD continues to provide support services to victims and survivors of impaired driving at no charge through victim advocates and the 24-Hour Victim Help Line 1-877-MADD-HELP. For more information or to donate, visit <https://madd.org/> and follow MADD on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [TikTok](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#).

### **About Lanzer Strategies LLC**

Lanzer Strategies LLC provides expert lobbying & public affairs consulting services to achieve its clients' legislative goals in Colorado. With a decade of legislative success, founder & lobbyist Fran Lanzer has the experience to take your policy solution from the drawing board to reality. This full-service public affairs firm delivers lobbying services, coalition building, PR & media strategies, and grassroots advocacy to move your agenda forward at the Colorado Capitol. Learn more at [www.lanzerstrategies.com](http://www.lanzerstrategies.com).

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