

ROBERT W. O'DONNELL
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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

February 15, 1983

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: ROB DUNHAM, 843-1700

O'DONNELL RE-INTRODUCES BAR BILL

State Representative Robert W. O'Donnell, D-198, today re-introduced a bill that would give community residents a voice in proceedings to close nuisance bars.

O'Donnell, the House Majority Whip, said "neighbors should have the right to determine who can hold a liquor license in their community. This bill would give the community a much stronger say in these matters."

Under existing laws, O'Donnell said, "the Liquor Control Board does not have to let neighbors testify. Our experience has been that the Board ignores or merely tolerates citizens' complaints. This bill requires the LCB to give 'substantial weight' to any testimony given by residents in connection with a public hearing held by the Board.

"Additionally, the bill provides the community with the opportunity to testify on applications for new liquor licenses and on transfers of existing licenses," O'Donnell said.

"The proposal was approved last year by both the House and State Senate," O'Donnell explained. "But the bill was vetoed after a number of unnecessary eleventh-hour amendments were tacked onto it. I am extremely optimistic that the bill will become law this time around."

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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March 17, 1983

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: ROB DUNHAM, 843-1700

State Representative Robert W. O'Donnell (D-Germantown) today blasted the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board for distributing materials criticizing mayoral candidate W. Wilson Goode in State Liquor Stores across Philadelphia.

O'Donnell said "it's bad enough that the LCB has failed so disgracefully in its management and enforcement of Pennsylvania's liquor laws. Now they have permitted the stores to distribute a private, special interest publication that does a front-page hatchet job on Wilson Goode."

O'Donnell charged the Liquor Control Board with authorizing Pennsylvania's 730 State Liquor Stores to distribute copies of The Observer, the privately produced Journal of the Pennsylvania Liquor Industry. The Observer issue in question contains negative references to Wilson Goode in three separate front page articles, O'Donnell said.

The publication also contains a statement from LCB Chairman Daniel W. Pennick announcing that the Board has discontinued publishing its quarterly price list in order to save money. Price list information will now be provided four times a year in The Observer, Pennick said.

O'Donnell called the savings "inconsequential. And in any event, the distribution of this other material violates the principle that the State shouldn't interfere in political matters," he said. "I think this arrangement is outrageous. It is offensive both to Wilson Goode supporters and to the citizens of Pennsylvania. The LCB should not be in politics."

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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May 12, 1983

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: ROB DUNHAM, 843-1700

HOUSE PASSES O'DONNELL NUISANCE BAR BILL

The State House of Representatives has overwhelmingly passed Bob O'Donnell's bill to open liquor license proceedings to the public.

O'Donnell's bill, which passed by a margin of 169-27, would give neighbors of local bars cited as public nuisances the opportunity to testify at any public hearings of the state Liquor Control Board on the suspension, revocation, or renewal of that bar's license. It would also provide residents the right to testify on applications for new liquor licenses and on transfers of existing licenses.

Representative O'Donnell (D-East Falls), the House Majority Whip, said "neighbors should have the right to determine who gets -- and gets to keep -- liquor licenses in the community. Currently, when the LCB holds a hearing, they might let residents in but it doesn't have much effect on the final outcome.

"Communities stuck with nuisance bars need more than just lip service from the LCB," O'Donnell said. "This bill would require the Liquor Control Board to give 'substantial weight' to testimony from neighbors and to make their final decision based on the preponderance of the evidence presented at the hearing."

Last year, O'Donnell's proposal was passed by both houses of the legislature as part of a larger liquor bill. That bill was vetoed by the governor because of unnecessary amendments in its other sections. "This time the bill will have the opportunity to stand on its own merits," O'Donnell said. "The matter will now be in the hands of the Senate, and I urge everyone interested in the bill to lobby for its passage."

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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October 24, 1983

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: ROB DUNHAM, 843-1700

O'DONNELL OPPOSES LIQUOR LICENSE LOOPHOLE

The State House of Representatives today defeated an amendment that would have relaxed state requirements for certain liquor licenses.

State Representative Robert W. O'Donnell (D-Germantown), the leader of House opponents of the measure, argued on the floor of the House that "the proposal would have the effect of opening a loophole in the liquor law allowing for a proliferation of new liquor operations without public scrutiny or public hearings."

The amendment would have permitted liquor license holders to run a separate bar with a separate entrance on their premises without obtaining the additional licensing now required. O'Donnell, who is the prime sponsor of legislation to expand community participation in liquor license proceeding, said "we cannot back away from giving neighbors significant input into decisions affecting liquor licensing."

O'Donnell called the 147-44 rejection of the amendment "a strong indication of House sentiment on licensing matters."

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