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Watchdog Labels Padilla Brewmaster of Budweiser Sweepstakes

California State Senator Sneaks in Big Alcohol Legislation

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (April 5, 2012) – Once again a California legislator is gambling with public health, this time by gutting and amending a bill, SB 778, to allow beer, wine and spirits companies to advertise through sweepstakes and contests. State Senator Alex Padilla (Democrat-Pacoima), whose district includes California's largest Budweiser factory, received over \$53,000 dollars in political contributions from beer, wine and liquor companies in 2010.

"Senator Padilla wants to let Budweiser put their name all over stores, TV, and Facebook as the sponsor of giant giveaway sweepstakes and contests," stated Alcohol Justice Executive Director Bruce Lee Livingston. *"Over the past few years Big Alcohol got away with raising the caps on giving away gifts like branded t-shirts and baseball hats in California, now they want unlimited advertising through gambling promotions."*

Padilla's Senate Bill 778 started out in 2011 as a pension reform bill. But through the often-despised and frequently stealthy "gut and amend" process, it is now an industry-sponsored *freebie* to allow alcohol-related sweepstakes and contests in the Golden State. *"Senator Padilla used gut-and-amend to shamelessly bypass a more open and thorough examination of the bill – it's a slap in the face to those responsible for the state's public health and safety,"* said Livingston. The bill is now in the California State Assembly after an accelerated, nearly unanimous vote of support in the Senate.

"Big Alcohol has an unquenchable thirst for more sales and more profits, despite the harm their products cause to vulnerable drinkers, especially young people," stated Livingston. *"Alcohol sweepstakes and contests will flood messages to buy beer, wine and spirits into every digital nook and cranny of kids' lives. Sadly, they'll know more beer brands than U.S. Presidents' names."*

California already leads the country with nearly \$22 billion in annual alcohol sales. The state also leads the country in alcohol-related costs, estimated at \$38.4 billion a year in 2008, with 10,000 lives lost, and over 920,000 incidents of harm such as injuries, crime, high-risk sex, and property damage.

Brazilian, Belgian and Dutch controlled Anheuser-Busch InBev is the leading seller of beer in California, with brands like Budweiser and Bud Light. According to Advertising Age, A-B InBev spends over \$1.4 billion annually advertising in the U.S. Its ads and sponsorship messaging are ubiquitous and unavoidable in every form of media and especially troublesome when targeting young football, baseball, UFC and World Cup soccer fans.

"California does not need any more alcohol-related harm," stated Livingston. *"California residents and visitors don't need more encouragement to buy or consume alcohol, and California does not need alcohol sweepstakes and contests."*

As April is Alcohol Awareness Month, Alcohol Justice, the national alcohol industry watchdog, is encouraging public health advocates and parents to TAKE ACTION to put a stop to SB 778 - Senator's Padilla's ill-conceived gift to Big Alcohol - and keep alcohol sweepstakes and contests out of California.

Livingston added, *"We are asking the public to click on our "Take Action" button at www.AlcoholJustice.org, because if we don't stop these advertising sweepstakes in California now, the naming of our under-funded schools after Bud Light is just around the corner."*

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