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CIRCLING THE BARREL Alcohol Legislative Trends 2013-2022 & The California 10-Year Review of Alcohol Policy

New Report From Alcohol Justice Presented At The Global Alcohol Policy Conference 2023, Cape Town, South Africa

CAPETOWN, SOUTH AFRICA (October 25, 2023) – Carson Benowitz-Fredericks, Research Director at California-based [Alcohol Justice](#), and lead author of [Alcohol Legislative Trends 2013-2022 & The California 10-Year Review of Alcohol Policy](#), presented the new report today at [The Global Alcohol Policy Conference 2023](#), Cape Town, South Africa.

The report is based upon a systematic evaluation of alcohol-related California legislation from 2013 to 2022. Key findings indicate an accelerated pace of deregulatory changes to California alcohol and related codes that move the state further from the evidence-based protective policies laid out in the World Health Organization (WHO)'s [SAFER Technical Package](#).

- **From the report:** *“To promote effective legislation, the World Health Organization’s Safer technical package provides an evidence-based collection of protective policies for lawmakers.”*

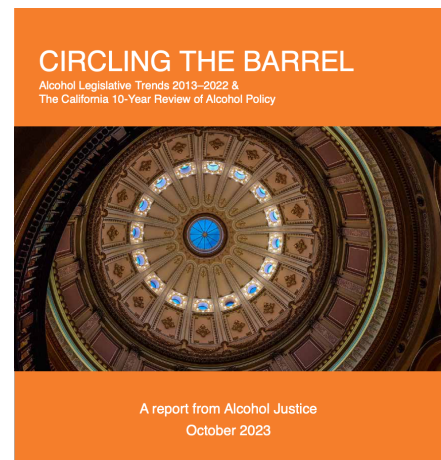
“We know what works and what doesn’t in terms of keeping people alive, keeping them healthy, and keeping them safe,” said Carson Benowitz-Fredericks, MSPH, Research Director at Alcohol Justice. “We have 80 years of research into it. What we don’t always know is how far our leaders are moving us away from it, and how fast, and in what ways. That’s what we set out to answer—what are California legislators doing, and how can we hold them accountable?”

- **From the report:** *“Over the 10-yr period, 380 bills were identified as potentially affecting alcohol policy in California. Of these, 319 addressed policies within a SAFER domain.”*

“It’s hard for me to believe that even with the state’s own [well-documented litany of increasing alcohol-related mortality and other harms and costs](#) to California residents, visitors and government, the legislature consistently introduces bills to make the industry more profitable at the extreme expense of public health and safety,” stated Cruz Avila, Executive Director, Alcohol Justice. “This must change.”

- **From the report:** *In California “...alcohol-related deaths spiked 25.5% between 2019 and 2020, outpacing the overall increase in mortality—an overall increase that included COVID-19 deaths.”*

“International roadmaps like the [WHO’s SAFER initiative](#) are powerful; SAFER not only provides unprecedented guidelines to reduce alcohol harm on a global scale, but represents decades of dedication maintained by public health advocates like Alcohol Justice,” said Hailey Fromkin, Co-Author, Alcohol Justice. “As a researcher joining the ranks of passionate players working to reduce the insidious and pervasive suffering caused by alcohol in society, I am proud of reports like this one, which offer vital insight into how the SAFER vision is playing out in real-time legislation.”



- **From the report:** “...California fell short, with alcohol tax policies rated red (completely noncompliant with best practices), and dram shop and overconcentration protections rated yellow (severely compromised).”

“This is an extremely important and useful if discouraging report which confirms my perspective that in many states, but especially in California, alcohol industry producers and retailers have an undue influence in the legislative process,” stated Thomas K. Greenfield, PhD, Senior Scientist, [Alcohol Research Group](#), [Public Health Institute](#), Board Member, Alcohol Justice. “That has resulted in regular policy backward slippage that makes alcohol more and more available, despite steadily increasing costs to society and damage to public health.”

- **From the report:** “By all indications, the California legislature is being heavily pressured—culturally, economically, and/or via industry influence—to empower industry to the detriment of public health.”

“This [report](#) is a much needed wake-up call for California policymakers that Government Under the Influence of Big Alcohol is causing great harm to the people and the state,” said Michael Scippa, Public Affairs Director at Alcohol Justice. “We look forward to the day that our legislators embrace and apply the grounded-in-evidence [WHO SAFER Package](#) to all future California alcohol-related legislation. That simple action will result in policies that protect public health, instead of industry sales and profits which the past ten years of California alcohol-related legislation have favored.”

Download the report here: <https://bit.ly/3ZXD7ki> or scan the QRCode



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