

Minnesota Maintains Sunday Beer Sales Ban

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Stock up on beer, wine and liquor on Saturday.

The Minnesota Senate on Tuesday soundly defeated an attempted repeal of the state's law barring liquor stores from being open on Sundays. The chamber did vote in favor of allowing craft beer taprooms to sell bottled "growlers" for takeaway on Sundays, but then the broader liquor bill to which the provision was attached got pulled from debate. It might not return this session.

The full-scale repeal went down on a 42-22 vote.

It's a perennial fight in the Legislature, but there was a more aggressive effort this year by Sunday sales advocates. The liquor store lobby has traditionally opposed repeal of the Sunday sales ban, and Teamsters union officials have argued that the taproom measure could infringe on their contracts with liquor wholesalers.

Arguing to retain current restrictions, Democratic Sen. Rod Skoe of Clearbrook said liquor stores won't necessarily benefit by staying open an extra day. He said even the growler measure would push Minnesota in the wrong direction.

"People should be able to plan just a little bit ahead to have these if they want for their utilization," Skoe said.

Republican Sen. Branden Petersen of Andover said as long as alcohol is legal the Sunday restrictions make no sense.

"The people of Minnesota are responsible enough to decide if they are going to go to the store and buy a case of beer or not," he said.

Minnesota is one of 12 states with a Sunday sales ban. Restaurant and bar patrons can buy alcohol as long as it's consumed on site.

The underlying liquor bill that's now in limbo also would have allowed later bar closing hours during baseball's All-Star Game in Minneapolis this July and given the University of Minnesota its preferred plan for selling beer and wine at Gopher football games.

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