

Lakeview's State Lawmakers Push to Ban Guns in Businesses That Serve Booze



By **Serena Dai** on December 30, 2013 6:37pm | @ssdai

LAKEVIEW — Lakeview's state elected officials united Monday to repeat their desire to amend the state's concealed-carry law — particularly to ban guns in all businesses that serve alcohol.

Currently, the law only bans guns at establishments where booze represents more than 50 percent of sales, meaning guns are allowed in many restaurants.

Senate President John Cullerton also said he wanted to make banning guns in retail businesses and public places the default, not the exception, so that businesses that don't want guns don't have to post **state-designated signs**.

It's "ludicrous" to require people to opt-out instead of opt-in, Cullerton said.

"Just have the default be, you can't have a gun unless the sign says you can," he said.

Cullerton, State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz and State Rep. Ann Williams spoke at an information session Monday for small businesses, bringing along Colleen Daley, executive director of Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence, and restaurateur Glenn Keefer, who's now well-known for **preemptively posting a "no-gun" sign** at his River North steakhouse Keefer's earlier this year.

Illinois became the last state to legalize concealed-carry, and the law goes into effect in 2014, though it will be some time before gun owners will be able earn the correct permit.

The officials said they plan to push **amendments such as banning guns** everywhere with a liquor license once they return to Springfield at the end of January.

Feigenholtz's office said **they've fielded many questions** from small businesses confused about whether permit holders will be able to bring guns into their businesses.

But only a handful of non-reporters and non-working officials attended the event in the Town Hall Police Department community room, one of which was entrepreneur Mark Thomas, who is **running for alderman** of the 44th Ward.

Some questions shed light on the unknowns that still exist.

Only landlords — not businesses who are on a lease — can decide whether a building can post a "no-guns" sign. Garry Albrecht, who represented Equinox, 3401 N. Broadway, asked whether the business would be liable if a landlord denied a request for a "no-gun" sign and an incident happened.

Brandon Nemec with the state's attorney's office said they've found no civil suit where the business would be held liable instead of the property owner, but Keefer said he decided to

increase his workplace violence insurance, anyway.

Bars can be liable for drunk driving incidents, and a similar argument could be made with a poor mix of alcohol and guns, Keefer said.

"I feel like it's coming at us," Keefer said. "A little more money, we want to protect ourselves against people doing something stupid."

Others showed up to hear how the politicians would describe the law to business owners, including West Loop resident Mike Robichard. To him, it sounded like they were discouraging small business owners from letting law-abiding gun owners from entering, he said.

"The problem is not the citizens," Robichard said. "They're not going to be criminals. They're going to have the training."

Thomas, who owns The Alley, 3228 N. Clark St., and plans to ban guns in the store, said he thinks that few of the politics will matter in Lakeview once reality sets in later this year. The habits of law-abiding people won't change, he said, and things will largely carry on as they have been.

Concealed-carry is a big news issue, but "it's not going to be a reality issue," he said.