



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Michael Scippa 415-548-0492  
Jorge Castillo 213-840-3336

## **Kudos to Governor Brown for Signing Bill to Ban Self-Serve Alcohol Sales in California**

### **Youth Accessibility and Alcohol-Related Harm Will Be Reduced**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (October 10, 2011) -- Alcohol Justice (formerly Marin Institute) praised Governor Jerry Brown today for signing a bill to ban alcohol sales through self-serve checkout machines in California. The bill, AB 183, authored by Assembly Member Fiona Ma (D-San Francisco), was approved by the legislature in September and had been sitting on the Governor's desk for nearly a month.

*"Until he did it, we really weren't sure what the Governor was going to do,"* stated Michael Scippa, Public Affairs Director at Alcohol Justice. *"But a last minute demonstration of impassioned support by state religious leaders may have helped him understand that the bill is not just about preserving union jobs as opponents tried to unfairly characterize the measure. AB 183 is about preserving the public health and safety of all California residents and visitors."*

A rise in self-serve checkout lanes in California stores that sell alcoholic beverages was beginning to create a recipe for disaster. [Research](#) over the past few years from [UCLA](#) and [San Diego State University](#) indicated self-checkout machines failed to operate properly almost 10% of the time when alcohol was scanned, and that up to 32% of the time students were not asked to show ID. In addition, Metro United Methodist Urban Ministry found that young people were able to "game" the self-checkout system an amazing 70% of the time, by scanning a 12-pack of soda and bagging a 12-pack of beer. But concerns went beyond dangerous youth access. Self-serve checkout machines also do not prevent already intoxicated adults from illegally purchasing more alcohol.

*"Easy access to alcohol is a key driver of over-consumption, which in turn causes violent crime, car crashes, and high-risk sex,"* stated Jorge Castillo, Alcohol Justice Advocacy & Outreach Manager. *The opponents of AB 183 chose to ignore all the evidence-based research on the dangers and tried to paint the effort as a self-serving 'union-sponsored bill.' Thankfully the Governor recognized that protecting public health and safety was more important than protecting additional profits from automating alcohol sales."*

In addition to strong support from faith-based leaders statewide, AB 183 enjoyed support from a broad alliance of organizations that included MADD, Consumer Federation of California, California Council on Alcohol Problems, California Police Chiefs, [Alcohol Justice](#), California Narcotic Officers Association, California's Police Officers (PORAC), California Professional Firefighters, and thousands of individuals. Many of these supporters also fought to pass an earlier version of bill authored by former Assembly Member Hector De La Torre (D-Los Angeles). His bill, AB 523, was originally introduced in 2008, with an updated version, AB 1060, passing through the legislature in August of 2010. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, however, vetoed it in September of 2010. Mr. De La Torre term-ed out of the legislature at the end of 2010.

*"We sincerely appreciate Governor Brown's decisive leadership on this issue,"* added Scippa. *"He has set a strong, admirable example for other states to follow. In California we recognize that the only responsible way to sell dangerous products, like tobacco, drugs, guns, ammo, and now alcohol, is through a face to face encounter with a trained clerk."*

For more information on the dangers of self-serve alcohol sales, go to: <http://bit.ly/nC0jnU>

####