

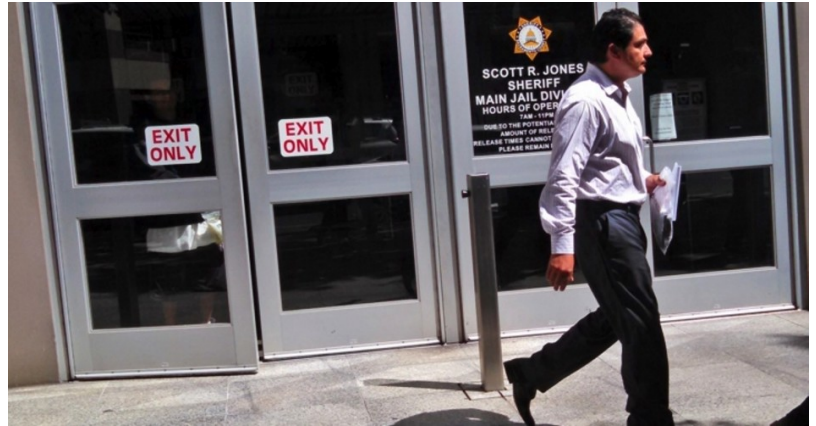


Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on August 25, 2014

DUI Charge on Calif. State Senator Who Voted Against Ride-Sharing

State Senator Ben Hueso (shown, D-San Diego) was enjoying himself Friday night during a reception by the Latino Legislative Caucus in Sacramento. A photo showed him joining other senators in singing, shirt untucked, wine glass in hand.

On his way home early Saturday morning, driving a state-owned Ford Fusion, Hueso got confused and [started driving the wrong way](#) on a one-way street near the state Capitol. CHP Officer Julie Howell said that arresting officers “observed [Hueso exhibiting] objective signs and symptoms of alcohol intoxication” and that he was so drunk that he was “unable to safely operate the vehicle.”



The irony is that on Friday Hueso voted in favor of Assembly Bill 612 which would, for all intents and purposes, end the ride-sharing industry in California which has been responsible for reducing DUIs. Customers using Lyft, Uber, and Sidecar have increasingly found an unexpected benefit of their services: Young people out on the town are more and more frequently using their ride-sharing apps on their smartphones rather than driving home, thus reducing their arrests for DUIs.

Sidecar CEO Sunil Paul said that the bill is “a burdensome approach that is backed by the taxicab lobby, really, to try and shut us down.” If it passes, it [will be] a disaster — it would literally spell the end of the ride-share industry.”

The senator, once he sobered up, was dutifully apologetic:

I am truly and profoundly sorry for the unacceptably poor personal judgment which I demonstrated last night. As someone who cares deeply about the public safety, I sincerely apologize to my family, my constituents and my colleagues in the Senate for breaching the trust they’ve all placed in me.

I will also engage in immediate, corrective actions to ensure this kind of personal conduct is never repeated.

One action he might consider engaging in is reconsidering his vote for Assembly Bill 612. Back in June, *The New American* reported that one of the benefits of the ride-sharing revolution spreading across the land is that DUIs are declining as customers use the services more frequently. It’s one of many benefits customers are enjoying along with lower costs, more personal service, and faster pickup and delivery. In addition, drivers suffer fewer “cab crimes” since they carry little or no cash, and their customers have been vetted before they go out on a run.

In Philadelphia, for instance, DUIs have been dropping ever since Uber entered the market there in early 2013, especially for those under the age of 30.



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In San Francisco, the birthplace of the ride-sharing revolution in June 2010, the results are even more startling: DUI arrests there have plummeted by nearly half since then.

In Seattle, Uber has reported that DUIs there have declined by 10 percent since they entered that market. The company explained that “potential drunk drivers will choose other options, like rides with Uber, when they are convenient, affordable and readily available.”

But with Assembly Bill 612, Hueso voted to remove that option, just when he personally needed it the most. It might take more than just one night in the city’s drunk tank to change his mind and his vote, however. Hueso’s brother Antonio owns USA Cab, one of the largest taxi companies in San Diego, and local papers have reported efforts by Ben to help brother Antonio protect his company from competition from other companies, including startups such as Lyft, Uber, and Sidecar.

Photo of California State Senator Ben Hueso (D-San Diego) leaving the Sacramento County Jail: AP Images

A graduate of Cornell University and a former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at www.LightFromTheRight.com, primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at badelman@thenewamerican.com.

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