April 28th marks the last day for policy committees to hear fiscal bills introduced in their respective houses; which means the lines at the Capitol elevators rival those at the coffee shops across the street (it’s a good thing we like to take the stairs).

Tuesday, both public safety and judiciary committees met. The Senate Public Safety Committee passed SB 505, our sponsored legislation to adopt multiple recommendations from the State Auditor’s report on the Cal Gang database. The committee also passed SB 699, our co-sponsored legislation to increase the tools available to law enforcement responding to sideshows. Both bills faced intense scrutiny by the committee and will need to be amended to address their concerns; but rest assured, we will be working to ensure that any proposed amendments do not compromise the integrity of the bills.

Also heard by the Senate Public Safety committee were two bills on drug impaired driving, SB 65 and SB 698, both by Senator Jerry Hill. Cal Chiefs has been working with his office and the Santa Clara District Attorney’s office for a number of months on these bills. Despite significant resistance from committee staff, both bills passed out of committee. SB 65 creates parity between our current drinking while driving laws and our laws addressing marijuana consumption while driving. SB 698 addresses the concurrent use of marijuana and alcohol. While both bills cleared the committee, we were left concerned by comments made from committee members suggesting that no one had ever killed anyone after smoking marijuana and driving, and that law enforcement reports that marijuana-impaired drivers follow more traffic laws. We are partnering with Assemblymember Lackey’s Office, the CHP, and the Sacramento Police Department to host a drugged driving demonstration at the Capitol on May 10th to bring media attention to the issue.

In the afternoon, the Senate Judiciary Committee heard our third sponsored bill of the day, SB 378, which authorizes the ABC to temporarily suspend a license by a temporary restraining order when the action is deemed urgent and necessary to protect against an immediate threat to health and safety. Despite growing opposition from tribal interests, the bill passed out of the committee.

At the same time, the Assembly Health Committee heard multiple bills to regulate marijuana edibles supported by Cal Chiefs. We were able to provide testimony supporting a universal symbol for all marijuana products as well as state review of all edible packaging. Both bills passed through the committee.

To wrap it up the day, the Assembly Budget Sub-Committee #4 held a hearing on the Governor’s Trailer Bill for Marijuana Regulation. Cal Chiefs, the League of Cities, and others strongly oppose the trailer bill. On Monday, we issued a ten-page letter of opposition detailing our concerns with the League of Cities. Having met directly with all of the committee members, we were able to ensure that they were well-briefed on our concerns. The trailer bill faced intense scrutiny and questioning by the committee, which left the item open. We are confident that many of the concerns listed in our opposition letter will be addressed by the committee.

We are looking forward to seeing many of you on May 10th for Legislative Day, where attendees will have the opportunity to discuss many of these issues with their elected officials. As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.