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New legislation aims to help curb violence in licensed premises

Edmonton... Proposed changes to the *Gaming and Liquor Act* will improve public safety in licensed premises by providing police with more power to deal with suspected gang members, their associates and problem patrons.

One key proposed amendment in Bill 42, introduced in the Legislature on April 21, will help prevent gang-related crime and violence in bars and nightclubs. Police will be given the ability to exclude and remove suspected gang members and their associates before an offence is committed. The presence of these individuals is seen as a danger to the safety of others based on recent incidents where bystanders have been injured.

“Entertainment spots are supposed to be places where you can go and have a good time. The last thing someone wants to worry about is getting caught in the middle of a violent incident,” said Fred Lindsay, Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security. “Providing the police with these powers will improve the safety of Albertans in and around licensed premises, and help create safer communities which is a key priority of this government.”

Another proposed amendment would provide licensees with the authority to collect, use and share limited information about problem patrons with other business operators. This proposed change would enable licensees to work together to prevent troublesome individuals from moving between bars and nightclubs and creating similar situations in a new venue.

Other minor amendments are required to ensure the Act remains relevant and effective in its regulation of gaming and liquor activities in the province.

“We’ve seen too many violent incidents in and around bars, and these amendments will help enhance the ability of police to protect Albertans by removing people who don’t respect the law before a dangerous situation occurs,” said Rob Anderson, Parliamentary Assistant to the Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security.

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