ATAC Director Backs New OWI Proposals

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bears law, would also help law enforcement officers and prosecutors.

“No question, it’s going to aid the fight against OWI and make it easier to get the drunk driver off the road...Lives will be saved,” he said.

Bordelon is optimistic the bill will be approved in the House.

“We’re halfway there,” he said, referring to yesterday’s Senate vote.

Action was deferred on a bill which would allow drivers to have their licenses returned if they refused an alcohol breath test and were later found innocent of an OWI charge, Bordelon said.

Now, a person’s driver’s license is not returned for six months if he refuses to take a breath test, he said.

The ATAC director opposes the proposed measure since it would make refusal of the breath test more attractive to motorists and could make OWI convictions more difficult.

Bordelon said he was pleased that action on the proposal was deferred yesterday.

“We feel that for all practical purposes, the bill is dead,” he said.

SETS DEFINITE LIMITS

ATAC Director Supports State OWI Proposals

By KATHLEEN THAMES
Advertiser Staff Writer

A proposal to establish a .10 percent blood alcohol concentration (BAC) as conclusive evidence of intoxication would make it easier for citizens to learn safe drinking levels, the director of Lafayette’s ATAC program said today.

Phil Bordelon of the Alcohol Traffic Action Campaign, said the measure would give the public some statutory guidelines. It was approved by a 31-5 vote in the state Senate yesterday and now goes to the House.

Now, a .10 BAC level is one of several “tools” law enforcement officers and prosecutors use to prove that a person is guilty of drunk driving, he said. But it is not conclusive evidence that a person was driving while intoxicated.

Better Information

“The public was kind of in a dilemma,” Bordelon said, explaining that a person could roughly estimate how many drinks he could consume before reaching a .10 BAC level. But many realized that BAC level was not enough to be convicted of drunk driving.

If the proposal becomes law, Bordelon said, organizations such as ATAC can better inform motorists about how many drinks they can consume in a certain period before reaching an intoxication level that could result in a drunk driving conviction.

That may lead to implementation of a program now being considered, he said.

“The new program is to provide some kind of equipment to local bars or other establishments which serve alcoholic beverages that will allow people to measure their own BAC level before they get behind the wheel of a car,” Bordelon said.

The director said some of the discussion on the Senate floor yesterday centered around physical tolerance of alcohol.

‘Judgmental Skills’

But Bordelon said “judgmental skills,” which are not visible, are affected at a .10 BAC level according to scientific tests.

Bordelon said the proposal, if it

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