

# Limits on lap dancing sought

## SHERIFF PROPOSES COUNTY ZONING RESTRICTIONS

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Getting a lap dance could get a bit more difficult in Sacramento County.

The Sheriff's Department is proposing an ordinance to make lap dances illegal in adult entertainment clubs in the unincorporated area that are not in designated industrial zones.

The Board of Supervisors will discuss the ordinance at its meeting Tuesday.

While officials portrayed the move as a zoning issue to help keep adult entertainment in specific areas - away from schools and churches - they also said it could cut down on such problems as loitering, prostitution and reduced property values.

"It helps the county and law enforcement deal with the secondary effects," said John Reed, deputy county counsel.

Clubs that serve alcohol have long been unable to offer nude strip shows, said Guy Fuson, a county business license manager.

In the early 1990s, several businesses found a way around the nudity ban by opening as juice bars, places that didn't serve alcohol.

In response, the county adopted zoning changes in 1995 to govern adult entertainment. The rules limited strip clubs to sites within industrial zoned areas that are at least 1,000 feet from sensitive public areas.

Reed contends that about three years later, in 1998, two clubs on Auburn Boulevard - The Embers and The Body Shop - began operating as topless bars.

In 2006, the county sued to close the two clubs, claiming that they were operating illegally without valid general business licenses and in areas not zoned for such entertainment.

The clubs claimed that there were not an adequate number of locations within the county they could move to, said George Mull, the attorney representing both bars.

In December, a judge ruled in the county's favor. The strip clubs have appealed.

Mull said both of his clients are planning to put the tops back on their dancers. The women would essentially dance in bras and panties.

County officials said this is a common way clubs can get around rules governing strip clubs.

"Studies considered by the sheriff revealed that lap dance has been an integral part of the operation of adult live theater nationwide, since introduction of the concept in the 1970s," the supervisors' information packet says. "The sheriff has identified physical contact dance as occurring in all adult live theaters licensed by the county."

The proposed ordinance would prohibit lap dancing - so-called "physical contact dance" - in any businesses other than those that are licensed and zoned for use as an adult entertainment club.

That means even if dancers don't disrobe, they still would be prohibited from giving a lap dance.

"There's not a single word of (the ordinance) which won't be stricken down by the courts," Mull said. "They're just begging for a lawsuit."

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