

General Law Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-797

AN ACT REQUIRING SCHEDULED START TIME DISCLOSURES IN MOTION

Title: PICTURE ADVERTISEMENTS.

Vote Date: 3/21/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute (LCO No. 6100)

PH Date: 2/19/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Sen. Martin M. Looney, 11th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

Proposed Substitute Bill No. 797 (LCO 6100) is similar to the original committee bill in that both would require movie theaters to disclose that movie trailers and other advertisements may cause a film to start significantly later than its published start time. Senator Looney submitted [written testimony](#) explaining that he introduced this bill in response to complaints from constituents who were adversely impacted by unexpectedly long movie previews.

The original language required a theater to publish a start time for advertisements alongside the start time of the actual film. This proposal was revised based on feedback from various stakeholders who explained that movie previews are constantly updated by central distribution services, and therefore can change daily. Instead, the proposed substitute language requires theaters to disclose that the actual start time of the picture may vary ten minutes or more from the time listed in the advertisement. In addition, the substitute language lowers the proposed fine from \$1000 to \$500.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Bryan Cafferelli, Commissioner, Department of Consumer Protection](#) notes potential challenges related to enforcement of the original committee bill. He recommends pushing back the effective date to January 1, 2026 and budgeting for a temporary staff member who could help theaters prepare to meet the new requirement.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Senator Martin Looney](#) explains that he introduced SB 797 in response to constituents who complained that long movie previews caused them to incur additional expenses, experienced childcare issues, or view content they found objectionable. He argues that movies are

different from other forms of entertainment because theater performances, sporting events, and concerts usually begin close to their advertised starting time. Overall, Senator Looney characterizes this legislation as representing "fairness for moviegoers and a commitment to truth in advertising."

[Timothy Gabriele](#) submitted written testimony in support of SB 797. He explains that he avoids going to movies because of the unexpected time commitment, and he raises the possibility that excessive advertisements are not making theaters money but rather driving audience members to streaming services and other forms of entertainment. Mr. Gabriele urges the committee to find a compromise that keeps cinemas open while also supporting transparency.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Lew Michaels, Executive Director, Cinestudio](#) testified in opposition to SB 797 largely due to challenges inherent in implementing the requirements set forth in the original language. He explains that his theater often does not know the length of pre-show content until well after tickets go on sale. Mr. Michaels also notes that patrons who rely on an advertised start time could disrupt other moviegoers' experiences. He proposes an alternative approach that is similar to the proposed substitute language.

[Scott Thompson, Region Manager NE, Cinepolis USA](#) testified in opposition to SB 797. He notes that pre-show content changes frequently, so exact start times are fluid. Mr. Thompson adds that previews help theaters like his that have dine-in service to raise revenue while limiting disruptions to the movie. He urges the committee to vote no on the bill.

[Kevin Connor, SVP, General Counsel and Secretary, AMC Theaters](#) opposes SB 797, arguing that the bill would add to movie theaters' ongoing economic difficulties. He notes that the length of trailers will frequently change, making the requirements of the original language impractical. Mr. Connor characterizes trailers as an enjoyable part of the moviegoing experience, and he raises the possibility that the bill's requirements would lead to higher costs for consumers.

[Doug Murdoch, Executive Director, Connecticut Association of Theater Owners, Incorporated](#) writes in opposition to SB 797. He raises three main concerns regarding the original language:

- (1) Mr. Murdoch argues that the requirements would be too complex for movie theaters to comply with and would disrupt theater schedules and moviegoers' experiences.
- (2) He explains that the movie theater industry is still recovering from the effects of COVID, and the costs of complying with new requirements would present additional challenges.
- (3) Mr. Murdoch argues that advertising two times would confuse moviegoers and negatively impact their experience.

[Avid moviegoer Cole von Richthofen](#) submitted written testimony in opposition to SB 797, echoing the points made in movie theater owners' testimony.

Reported by: Betsy Francolino

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