

# California bans under-age tanning, public guns

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California governor Jerry Brown won praise Monday for banning under 18s from using tanning beds, the first US state to do so to protect minors from increased skin cancer risks.

The move was approved amid a slew of new state laws, including one that bans people from openly carrying guns in public, while he vetoed a plan to let colleges take account of ethnic make up in their admissions policies.

Brown signed the tanning bill into law Sunday after dismissing arguments from the tanning industry that the current law -- which requires children between age 14 and 18 to get parental consent -- was sufficient.

"California's decision to ban under 18 year olds from tanning beds is a welcome step in the right direction for a needless exercise that is a known and significant health threat," Wendy K.D. Selig, head of the Melanoma Research Alliance.

"It is well documented that indoor tanning contributes to skin cancer, including melanoma, which can have fatal consequences," she added.

The MRA cited studies compiled by the World Health Organization which said there was a 75% increased risk of melanoma -- the most common cancer in US women age 25-29 -- in indoor tanning bed use.

The author of the new law in California -- which enjoys year-round sunshine, in the south of the state at least -- also praised Brown, saying the move was backed by doctors, nurses and the American Cancer Society.

"I praise Governor Brown for his courage in taking this much-needed step to protect some of California's most vulnerable residents -- our kids.... If everyone knew the true dangers of tanning beds, they'd be shocked," said Ted Lieu.

Meanwhile Brown also signed into law a bill banning handgun owners from openly carrying their weapons in public.

Until now Californians have been able to carry unloaded guns in public, but police and sheriffs had sought to ban the practise because it makes people frightened.

"I listened to the California police chiefs," Brown said in a statement, while deputy Anthony Portantino, the author of the bill, added: "The bottom line is the streets will be safer for law enforcement and families."

Brian Malte of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence said: "This finally puts an end to the dangerous and intimidating practice of carrying openly displayed guns in public.

"California families will now be able to take their families to the park or out to eat without the worry of getting shot by some untrained, unscreened, self-appointed vigilante," he added.

Among other legislative action, Brown vetoed a draft bill that would have let public universities in California consider race, gender or ethnicity in their admissions processes.

The bill had been highlighted by Republican students at the elite US Berkeley college who organized a campus bake sale which charged students different prices depending for cookies, depending on their minority status.

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