

In Calif., no more tanning beds for under-18 crowd

SACRAMENTO, California (AP) – California girls who dream about the sun-kissed skin glorified in song by [Katy Perry](#) will have to wait until they turn 18 before they can get the effect from tanning beds under a new first-in-the-nation law.

Supporters of the law said the higher age limit is needed because skin damage caused by the type of radiation used in tanning beds often leads to melanoma.



Rob Engelhart, for USA TODAY

Gov. [Jerry Brown](#) announced Sunday that he had signed into law a bill that prevents children under 18 from using the popular tanning method. The law takes effect Jan. 1. Although Texas has banned the use of tanning beds for children under 16, the bill makes California the first state to set a higher age limit. Thirty other states also have some age restrictions on the use, said the bill's author, state Sen. [Ted Lieu](#).

Under current law, children 14 and under in California already cannot use the beds, but those ages 15 to 17 can do so with permission from their parents. Illinois, [New York](#), Ohio and [Rhode Island](#) have considered an age limit similar to California's, but have yet to enact them, said the Democrat from Torrance, California.

The ban will hurt businesses, many of them owned by women, said the Indoor Tanning Association. About 5 percent to 10 percent of its members' customers are under 18, the industry group noted.

The organization said tanning salons already are regulated by the state Department of Consumer Affairs and the federal Food and Drug Administration — regulations it called the most stringent in the nation.

But Lieu and other ban supporters said the higher age limit is needed because skin damage caused by the type of radiation used in tanning beds often leads to melanoma, which is skin cancer that can be fatal. Lieu said early tanning by children can increase the risk.

They also say that avid tanning is particularly popular in the state, especially in affluent areas of [Southern California](#). Lieu pointed out there are more tanning salons in [Los Angeles County](#) than Starbucks coffee shops or McDonald's fast food restaurants.

"Girls in affluent California communities especially are surrounded by the message that being tanned all year round is cool," Christina Clarke, of the Cancer Prevention Institute of California, said in a recent statement supporting Lieu's bill. "Pop music star Katy Perry is even singing about it."

Lieu also cited a recent Stanford Cancer Institute-backed study that showed higher melanoma rates among girls and young women in areas of higher income.

Supporters said better education was also needed to counter practices that can lead to skin damage and melanoma. The measure was sponsored by the California Society of Dermatology and Dermatological Surgery and the AIM at Melanoma Foundation, and backed by other medical organizations and health insurers.

Lieu, in a statement praising Brown's decision, called skin cancer "a rising epidemic and the leading cause of cancer death for women between 25 and 29."

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