



# Liquor board shuts down Craig's, a popular Loyola college bar, after marathon hearing

[Jenn Ladd](#)

Associate Editor- *Baltimore Business Journal*

[Email](#) | [Twitter](#)

The city's liquor board on Thursday voted to shut down Craig's, the popular college bar frequented by Loyola and Towson University students, after finding it was a threat to public safety and was serving minors.

The unanimous vote of the Board of Liquor License Commissioners came after more than three hours of testimony from police who accused the bar of serving about 100 underage patrons during an October inspection. Public Safety department officials at [Loyola University Maryland](#) said the bar became a source of concern after they identified 19 incidents last year involving students drinking at Craig's that included a sexual assault allegation, an indecent exposure report, two assaults and people treated for alcohol poisoning.

Residents of the bar's Mid-Govans and Homeland neighborhoods also testified that some of Craig's rowdy patrons had become a years-long problem in the York Road area, saying that vandalism, destruction of property and bar goers found committing sex acts raised long-standing concerns about the bar in the heavily residential area.

## See Also

- [These tweets from Craig's patrons show why the beloved college bar has been shut down](#)

For Loyola students, Craig's has long loomed above other nightlife options on York Road for its lack of aesthetics, bargain-basement drink specials and abundance of sweaty undergrads. Dozens of Loyola students and alumni took to social media on Thursday to mourn its closure.

Liquor board chairman [Thomas Ward](#), who also heard testimony from Craig's owner, [Jeffrey Evans](#), said he was "totally unconvinced" that the bar had taken seriously its obligations to serve alcohol responsibly. He also said it was clear that the bar was serving patrons irresponsible amounts of alcohol.

"One of the restrictions of running a tavern is that you're not allowed to serve people to the point where they become unable to conduct themselves in a proper manner," Ward said. "It's obvious to me that many of these children were in such a shape."

Craig's, located at 5804 York Road, also does business as Favorite's Pub. The bar

was found guilty of one count of posing a threat to the safety and general welfare of the community and two counts of serving minors on separate occasions.

During testimony, police described how Baltimore and Loyola public safety officers conducted a joint inspection at Craig's on Oct. 25 at 1 a.m. where they discovered that about 100 of 125 patrons were underage. After the inspection, Loyola police said they transported the underage students back to the campus on a shuttle. Some of those students were so intoxicated, they vomited in the shuttle bus back to campus.

Only a few underage students had fake identification during the inspection, police testified, indicating that the students were able to enter the bar without having their identification checked.

Police conducted a second inspection on Dec. 4 and identified four underage men drinking in the bar, police testified. When police asked the bartender why minors were drinking in Craig's, they were told, "they got through our scanner," police said.

That ID scanner — which Evans, the owner, said he had purchased this summer for about \$2,000 — was used to screen ID cards presented by patrons. Evans testified that some bar patrons possess very convincing fake IDs that can fool both a bouncer and the scanner's inspections.

"We turn away hundreds of fake IDs every night. Those are the ones that got through," Evans said of the 100 or so underage students in the bar on Oct. 25.

Evans' attorney, Melvin J. Kodenski, objected to much of the testimony presented against the bar at Thursday's hearing, particularly any incidents not connected to the two inspections. But Ward, the liquor board's chairman, said that he was not convinced that the bar had made a case to remain open.

"I'm convinced that this place is an absolute detriment to the community in every respect," Ward said. "My decision is to close it completely, period."

Craig's' liquor license will be up for renewal at the end of April. Ward asked that, in the event of an appeal, the bar's closure should not be lifted until the appellate court reviewed the written testimony from the hearing.

Jan 23, 2015, 6:41am EST Updated: Jan 23, 2015, 4:10pm EST

