PHOENIX — A bill that would make last call an hour later and keep bars open until 2:30 a.m., gained initial approval yesterday despite attacks from legislators who said the bill puts greed before public safety.

By a vote of 55-25, the state House of Representatives passed the measure on to the Senate. It approved there, Gov. Janet Napolitano, who has said she is open to the measure, could then sign the bill into law.

A handful of legislators spoke out against the bill before entering their votes of disapproval. Rep. Russell Pearce, R-Mesa, called the bill a step backwards in the state’s efforts to deter drunken drivers.

“The purpose to keep a bar open longer is to consume more alcohol,” Pearce said. “When you leave them an hour later at a bar, to drink an hour longer, they are going to get an hour drunker and they have to drive home.” Pearce and others who spoke out against the bill, which has been rallied behind by the state’s hospitality and tourism industry, said the money a later closing time could bring to Arizona would not merit its potentially negative effects.

“We’re duped by the money,” Pearce said. “We think this is going to generate revenue and my concern is very simple... that the damage done no money can compensate for.”

Other dissenting voters rebuked the argument that Arizona’s 1 a.m. last call, one of the earliest in the country, was causing the state to lose tourists to other states.

“Some of the arguments for this bill is ‘everybody else has done it’. Well fellow members that’s not good enough for me. Just because everybody else has done it doesn’t mean that we should do it,” said Rep. Doug Quelland, R-Phoenix.

The majority of the legislators said the potential economic gains that longer bar-hours could bring Arizona made the bill worthwhile.

By Jeff Sklar
Senior Writer

Faculty and staff members are joining with university lobbyists and President Peter Likins in opposition to legislative proposals that would require fingerprinting all university employees and firing people convicted of certain felonies.

In the past several days, employees who are subscribed to a listserv for staff members have been offering opposition to the two bills.

And yesterday, some faculty senators agreed the bills overstep the bounds of legislative appropriateness. Likins echoed their sentiments, telling the senate he hoped both bills would die.

“The university would… prefer that the Legislature not interfere in our employment practices,” Likins said.

The bills forcing the university to fire people convicted of many felonies would strip those people of tenure, benefits and employment without affording them due process, said Faculty Senator Andrew Silverman.

The bill would terminate people convicted of felonies such as murder, stalking and sexual crimes, but would not include burglary and assault.

“One of the arguments for this bill is that longer bar-hours could bring Arizona made the bill worthwhile. It doesn’t mean that we should do it…” Well fellow members that’s not good enough for me. Just because everybody else has done it doesn’t mean that we should do it,” said Rep. Doug Quelland, R-Phoenix.

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By Natasha Bhuyan
Staff Writer

A proposed parking rate increase affecting residents of downtown and university neighborhoods met with much criticism and some sighs of relief yes-

The proposal would force residents to pay $12 — up from $2.50 — annually for the parking permit that allows them to park in the streets in front of their houses. An increasing rate estimated to reach $36 by 2008 would provide for better enforcement, the Park Wise team oversight committee said at the hearing.

Park Wise is a self-supporting residential parking program established in 1997.

Overflow parking problems from the UA were identified by all as one of the main reasons residents frequently don’t have a place to park.

“If it weren’t for the university, we wouldn’t have this problem,” said Joan Cox, an 86-year-old resident that lives near the Arizona Health Sciences Center.