

## Democrat group cancels local gastropub dinner reservation over foie gras

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A controversial menu option was the reason the California Democratic Council said it abruptly canceled dinner reservations for more than 100 people at a local gastropub ahead of its weekend convention at Fresno State.

Guri's Grubhouse on Shaw Avenue near Cedar Avenue was slated to host members of the council for a 7 p.m. Saturday dinner, but plans changed. A representative called the restaurant Thursday evening asking to cancel reservations and have the deposit refunded because the gastropub serves foie gras — duck or goose liver considered a delicacy by some.

The product, which translates to “fat liver,” is made by force-feeding birds large portions to enlarge their livers. It is considered by animal rights activists a form of animal cruelty. State legislation banned the sale and use of foie gras in 2012, but it was overturned in January after being ruled unconstitutional because it interfered with federal law.

Ray Bishop, president of the California Democratic Council, said he ordered the reservation cancellation after a Democratic council member told him the restaurant offered the product on its menu. He said the decision was based on principle: “Our group consists of progressive Democrats who stand for the proper treatment of animals and the planet,” he said. “Our principle is that we protect animals.”

Michael Jew, owner of Guri's Grubhouse, which opened its doors last fall, said he was "disappointed" the council decided to cancel its reservations. A "foie gras burger" is included in the restaurant's dinner menu and costs \$24 per entree.

"The feedback from my diners have been all positive for serving this ingredient," restaurant chef Megan Beck said, adding customers have told her "it's one of the best burgers they've ever had."

"As with any producer of meat products, there are producers that do it right and those that do it wrong," she said. "We choose to source our ingredient from Hudson Valley Cage Free Farms."

Bishop said in a phone interview Friday night the California Democratic Council will instead host its dinner at Elephant Lounge in Clovis. Up to 300 members of the organization are expected to be in town for the annual "The People's Empowerment Summit" aimed at increasing voter turnout.

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