

Joint Statement Asking Legislators to Consider the Cumulative Effects of Various Measures Promoting Alcohol

We are deeply concerned with the annual package of legislation that promotes the use of alcohol. While none of these bills may appear that damaging when examined individually, the harm is apparent when you consider the **cumulative** impact of so many bills that have been enacted in recent years along these lines. Just a few recent examples include permitting the sampling of wine and beer in grocery stores, wedding boutiques, day spas and farmers markets – not to mention the sale of alcohol at movie theatres.

Such legislation is harmful in two particular respects:

- 1) The line between drinking and driving is blurred. While the basic law enforcement message is “don’t drink and drive”, the practical message delivered in these instances is that “it is okay to drink a little bit and drive” (since in most situations the people served will be driving away from the establishment in question.) As evidenced by the number of DUI and Vehicular Homicide cases, adults have a hard time determining when “a little bit” becomes much too much. Our greater objection is the mixed message thus given our youth about drinking and driving. If adults have a hard time with this double standard you can imagine the difficulties posed to young people.
- 2) Some bills set a normalizing standard in terms of youth and the use of alcohol. The community norm for our youth ought to be that it is possible to enjoy fun activities without using alcohol, rather than seeing it casually used in conjunction with everyday activities such as running errands and to be offered a drink while going out for dinner.

Of course, not all alcohol related legislation is problematic. All we ask is that you take into account the above-stated considerations as you decide whether to pass or amend the various proposals that come before you.

Your assistance in “drawing the line” in terms of legislation that promotes the use of alcohol in manners that hurt our youth and undermine public safety would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your consideration of our perspective.

Sincerely,

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