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Drug-Free Action Hosts Panel Presentation Focusing on the Science Behind 21 As The Minimum Legal Drinking Age

Twenty-one: An Analysis of the Minimum Legal Drinking Age

(Columbus, OH) Drug-Free Action Alliance hosted a panel presentation today at the Ohio Statehouse to present science-based research on retaining the Minimum Legal Drinking Age (MLDA) at 21 years of age. Drug-Free Action Alliance recently released its position paper supporting the current 21 minimum legal drinking age law.

Richard Yoast, Ph.D., Director of the Office of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Prevention at the American Medical Association was joined by Doug Scoles, Director of Ohio MADD, Delaware County Juvenile Court Judge Kenneth Spicer, Andy Zweizig, Safe and Drug Free Schools Coordinator at the Dublin City School District and Brandon Haas, a student at Denison University as panelists for the presentation. Marcie Seidel, Assistant Director of Drug-Free Action Alliance, moderated the panel presentation.

Alcohol is the number one substance abuse problem in America and more young people die from alcohol-related causes than from all other illicit drugs combined; more than 5,000 per year. Reducing the Minimum Legal Drinking Age is currently garnering a great deal of national attention. A small group of individuals contend that extreme drinking found in college communities is a direct result of these laws.

However, Dr. Yoast disagrees with that premise. "College students drinking did not start with, and is not a response to, the 21 drinking age. They are responding to the desired effects of alcohol and also the values within college communities that encourage drinking," said Dr. Yoast.

Denison University sophomore student Brandon Haas said, "As an Ohio college student, I am deeply concerned by the substantial and overwhelmingly negative effects that would occur in my community if the drinking age were to be lowered."

Andy Zweizig offered that, "Lowering the drinking age will ultimately put a younger generation of students in jeopardy. If the drinking age is lowered, younger children will have access to alcohol earlier in life putting healthy social, emotional and cognitive development at risk."

"Since the 21 minimum drinking age law was enacted, nearly every state has produced a significant drop in teenage driving fatalities. If states lower the drinking age again, more teens will drink and drive and more will die," said Doug Scoles.

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Red Ribbon Celebration

College Initiative to Reduce
High Risk Drinking

Ohio Resource Network
Clearinghouse

Statewide Prevention
Coalition Association

Parents Who Host, Lose The Most:
Don't be a party to teenage drinking

Ohio Center for
Coalition Excellence

Know!

Youth Philanthropy
Council

www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org

“Retaining age 21 as the Minimum Legal Drinking Age is important based on the scientific research that was, in part, presented here today,” said Patricia Harmon, Executive Director of Drug-Free Action Alliance. “Research shows that not only are lives saved and alcohol-related injuries reduced with a higher drinking age, but also that youth ages 18 to 21 consume less alcohol when the minimum drinking age is 21.”

Delaware County Juvenile Court Judge Kenneth Spicer concluded that, “While I believe the various opinions on this issue are offered in sincerity and are well-intended, I am convinced absolutely no benefit will come from lowering the legal drinking age.”

Drug-Free Action Alliance is a not-for-profit organization that oversees the Ohio College Initiative to Reduce High-Risk Drinking. Forty-five Ohio colleges and universities are part of the initiative that work to change the alcohol-related culture on campuses and provide an environment to help influence the decisions that students make about alcohol use. Other Drug-Free Action Alliance programs include Know!, “Parents Who Host, Lose The Most: Don’t be a party to teenage drinking”, and the Ohio Red Ribbon Celebration.

More information about Drug-Free Action Alliance and retaining 21 as the Minimum Legal Drinking Age can be accessed at: www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org.

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