

"A child who reaches age 21 without smoking, abusing alcohol or using drugs is virtually certain never to do so."- Joseph A. Califano, Jr., CASA

21 is 21

Louisiana Law states that you must be 21 to drink alcohol.

Should there be legislation to prohibit underage persons from entering bars?

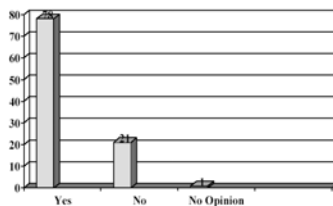


Figure 1 2001 Public Opinion Survey CADA New Orleans & the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission, shows great public support for closing this loophole.

Problem:

A loophole exist in our laws, that allows 18-20 year olds into bars and lounges where it is virtually impossible to enforce our state law mandating that individuals be 21 years or older to consume alcohol.

- Louisiana's loophole permits 18-20 year olds entrance to bars and lounges providing **"access to alcohol"**.
- Crowded campus bars and lounges make enforcement virtually impossible.

2002 LSU Results College Alcohol Study Harvard School of Public Health ⁱ

18-20 year old respondents said that the number of times in the past 30 days when they drank enough to get drunk

1-2 times = 40.3% 3-5 times = 14.4% 6-19 times = 15.9% never = 29.5%

18-20 year old respondents said that they or their friends usually get alcohol with no ID at off-campus bars

yes = 66% no = 23% don't know = 11%

18-20 year old respondents who began drinking regularly between ages of 13-20

yes = 65.8% no = 34.2%

18-20 year old respondents said the age at which they first drank alcohol regularly

age 13-15 = 4.7% age 16 = 16.8% age 17 = 17.4%
age 18 = 19.5% age 19-20 = 7.4% never = 34%

18-20 year old respondents best describe their current use of alcohol as

abstainer = 10.5% former drinker = 0.6% infrequent drinker = 7.5%

light drinker = 21% moderate drinker = 34% heavy drinker = 6.4%

Continued illegal alcohol consumption by minors.

Reduces the positive effects (and intent of legislature) in raising the drinking age to 21.

Louisiana law requires an age of 21 for legal consumption of Alcohol

40 of our Children ages 16-20 died in 2001, in Louisiana,

as a result of this loophole which reduces the effectiveness, in reducing existing law.

Deaths in Louisiana resulting in 2nd highest rate in nation for alcohol related highway fatalities.

Current Law invites 18-20 year olds to violate 21 law

Alcohol is an illicit drug for minors, loophole creates dangerous environment that invites those younger than 21 to violate laws that essentially can not be enforced.

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Highway fatalities must be reduced by enforcing the law (21) that was created to do so.

This means closing loopholes that are reducing the effectiveness of the law, and the intent of the law.

Solution: Close the Loophole

We propose Legislation preventing persons 18-20 years of age from entering into bars and lounges, where alcohol is the principle commodity sold, and can be consumed on the premises.

Supporting Facts:

"Students report that it is "fairly easy" to "very easy" to get alcohol.

55.3 percent of students report that it is "fairly easy" or "very easy" to get beer.

52.2 percent of students report that it is "fairly easy" or "very easy" to get wine coolers, and

47.6 percent of students report that it is "fairly easy" or "very easy" to get liquor.

The younger a person begins using alcohol, the greater the chance of developing **alcohol dependence or abuse** some time in their life.

Of those who begin drinking at age-18, 16.6% subsequently are classified with alcohol dependence and 7.8% with alcohol abuse. If a person waits until age-21 before taking their first drink, these risks decrease by over 60%.

More facts:The brain does not finish developing until a person is around 20 years old, and one of the last regions to mature is intimately involved with the ability to plan and make complex judgments. (Swartzwelder, 1998)

Approximately 11 million American youth under age 21 drink alcohol. Source: AMA FACTS

Alcohol is a major factor in unprotected sex among youth, increasing their risk of contracting HIV or other transmitted diseases. Source: AMA FACTS

- An overwhelming number of Americans (96%) are concerned about underage drinking; and a majority support measures that would help reduce teen drinking, such as stricter controls on alcohol sales, advertising, and promotion. (AMA –facts)

In a study conducted in 38 States and the District of Columbia, areas with greater numbers of drinking establishments had higher rates of alcoholism.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that the 21-year-old minimum drinking age laws have saved 20,043 lives since the mid-1970s.

31 percent of college students met criteria for a diagnosis of alcohol abuse and 6 percent for a diagnosis of alcohol dependence in the past 12 months, according to questionnaire-based self-reports about their drinking (Knight et al., 2002).

Drunk Driving: 2.1 million students between the ages of 18 and 24 drove under the influence of alcohol last year (Hingson et al., 2002).

***Progress...Passing the Law mandating 21to drink.
Now we let's close loopholes and allow this law to provide the
protection to our children, and the public as intended when enacted!***

***Our children deserve our best efforts to protect them from harm and
injury. Attorney General Richard P. Ieyoub***

Legislative Leadership Award (Louisiana was the last state to raise the drinking age to 21) Louisiana Attorney General Louisiana Attorney General Richard P. Ieyoub fought tirelessly to close a loophole in Louisiana's 21 year old drinking age which allowed young people between ages of 18 and 21 to buy and consume alcohol.

Attorney General Ieyoub then successfully defended the 21 year old drinking age before the Louisiana Supreme Court.

Supreme Court upheld this law as constitutional.

***Allowing 18-20 year olds into bars and lounges, is a loophole in the
present law, which renders this law virtually unenforceable especially
on campus's across our state.***

ⁱ 2002 LSU Results, College Alcohol Study, Harvard School of Public Health sub-sample of LSU students who are between 18-20 years of age cannot be generalized to that same age group within the entire state of Louisiana,

nor to students of the same age group who are attending other institutions
of higher education in Louisiana

ⁱⁱ *Parents' Resource Institute for Drug Education. (July 2001). Pride Questionnaire Report: 2000-01 National Summary, Grades 6 Through 12. Bowling Green, KY: Author.*