

Introduced by Senator Corbett

May 3, 2011

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 45—Relative to alcoholic beverage control.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 45, as introduced, Corbett. Underage alcohol use.

This measure would urge the Governor to make the prevention of underage alcohol use a priority within this state by engaging in a statewide effort to prevent and reduce underage drinking and its consequences.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Recent scientific studies show that alcohol causes
2 much more damage to the developing brains of adolescents and
3 teenagers than previously thought, and adolescent brains suffer
4 much more damage from the abuse of alcohol than adult brains;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, The adolescent brain is uniquely sensitive to
7 alcohol's effects because major changes in brain structure and
8 function occur during this developmental period; and

9 WHEREAS, Recent research indicates that adolescent substance
10 users show abnormalities in their brain functions that are also
11 linked to changes in neurocognition over time; and

12 WHEREAS, Abnormalities have been seen in brain structure
13 volume, white matter quality, and activation to cognitive tasks,
14 even in youth with as little as one to two years of heavy drinking
15 and consumption levels of 20 drinks per month, especially if more

1 than four to five drinks are consumed on a single occasion. It is
2 unknown whether these changes are reversible; and

3 WHEREAS, Because of continuous neurological developments
4 in adolescence and young adulthood, increased preferences for
5 risky behavior and novelty seeking emerge, predisposing teenagers
6 to experiment more with drugs and alcohol while being particularly
7 at risk of developing addictive behaviors; and

8 WHEREAS, The neural circuits that release chemicals that link
9 new, adult-like experiences with the motivation to repeat them
10 develop more rapidly during the teenage years than do the
11 mechanisms to control these urges and impulses which depend on
12 exercising reason and judgment at the conscious level, basically
13 the knowledge of right from wrong. As a result, teenagers are not
14 only more likely to feel enticed by drugs and alcohol than older
15 people, but are also more vulnerable to the adverse effects of
16 substance abuse; and

17 WHEREAS, Each year, approximately 5,000 young people
18 under 21 years of age die as a result of underage drinking; including
19 about 1,900 deaths from motor vehicle crashes, 1,600 as a result
20 of homicides, 300 from suicide, as well as hundreds from other
21 injuries such as falls, burns, and drownings; and

22 WHEREAS, Drinking continues to be widespread among
23 adolescents, as shown by nationwide surveys as well as studies in
24 smaller populations. According to an annual survey of U.S. youth,
25 three-fourths of 12th graders, more than two-thirds of 10th graders,
26 and about two in every five eighth graders have consumed alcohol;
27 and

28 WHEREAS, When youth drink, they tend to drink intensively,
29 often consuming four to five drinks at one time. Eleven percent
30 of eighth graders, 22 percent of 10th graders, and 29 percent of
31 12th graders report engaging in heavy episodic, or binge, drinking
32 within the past two weeks; and

33 WHEREAS, Data from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse
34 and Alcoholism's 2001–02 National Epidemiologic Survey on
35 Alcohol and Related Conditions, a survey of 43,000 U.S. adults,
36 showed that early alcohol use, independent of other risk factors,
37 may contribute to the risk of developing future alcohol problems.
38 Those who began drinking in their early teens were at greater risk
39 of developing alcohol dependence at some point in their lives, and
40 they were also at greater risk of developing dependence more

1 quickly and at younger ages. The findings were reported in Volume
2 160 of the Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine from
3 July 2006; and

4 WHEREAS, In 2007, the United States Surgeon General, in
5 collaboration with the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and
6 Alcoholism and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
7 Administration, issued a call to action to combat teen alcohol
8 drinking. The call to action highlighted the need to “[e]ngage
9 parents, schools, communities, all levels of government, all social
10 systems that interface with youth, and youth themselves, in a
11 coordinated national effort to prevent and reduce underage drinking
12 and its consequences.” In addition, the call to action urged
13 policymakers to “[p]romote an understanding of underage alcohol
14 consumption in the context of human development and maturation
15 that takes into account individual adolescent characteristics as well
16 as environmental, ethnic, cultural, and gender differences”; and

17 WHEREAS, The accumulating evidence of alcohol’s adverse
18 effects on the developing brain is compelling. Given the prevalence
19 of drinking and binge drinking among adolescents, the prevention
20 and reduction of underage drinking must be a priority for the people
21 of the State of California; and

22 WHEREAS, Governors of 41 states have joined the Leadership
23 to Keep Children Alcohol Free, a unique coalition of governors,
24 governors’ spouses, federal agencies, and public and private
25 organizations working to prevent the use of alcohol by children 9
26 to 15 years of age. It is the only national effort that focuses on this
27 age group. The initiative is alerting the nation to the critical public
28 health problem of underage drinking, mobilizing stakeholders, and
29 promoting evidence-based public policy initiatives; now, therefore,
30 be it

31 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
32 *thereof concurring,* That the Legislature urges the Governor to
33 make the prevention of underage alcohol use a priority of the state
34 by working with state law enforcement, education, and public
35 health leaders; engaging parents, schools, communities, and all
36 levels of government, all social systems that interface with youth,
37 and youth themselves in a statewide effort to prevent and reduce
38 underage drinking and its consequences; and ensuring that
39 California is active in the Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol
40 Free; and be it further

- 1 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
- 2 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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