

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 45

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 78

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

[Filed with Secretary of State September 6, 2011.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 45, 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.

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

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

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

WHEREAS, Abnormalities have been seen in brain structure volume, white matter quality, and activation to cognitive tasks, even in youth with as little as one to two years of heavy drinking and consumption levels of 20 drinks per month, especially if more than four to five drinks are consumed on a single occasion. It is unknown whether these changes are reversible; and

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

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

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

WHEREAS, Drinking continues to be widespread among adolescents, as shown by nationwide surveys as well as studies in smaller populations. According to an annual survey of United States youth, three-fourths of 12th graders, more than two-thirds of 10th graders, and about two in every five 8th graders have consumed alcohol; and

WHEREAS, When youth drink, they tend to drink intensively, often consuming four to five drinks at one time. Eleven percent of 8th graders, 22 percent of 10th graders, and 29 percent of 12th graders report engaging in heavy episodic or binge drinking within the past two weeks; and

WHEREAS, Data from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism's 2001–02 National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions, a survey of 43,000 United States adults, showed that early alcohol use, independent of other risk factors, may contribute to the risk of developing future alcohol problems. Those who began drinking in their early teens were at greater risk of developing alcohol dependence at some point in their lives, and they were also at greater risk of developing dependence more quickly and at younger ages. The findings were reported in Volume 160 of the Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine from July 2006; and

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

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

WHEREAS, Governors of 41 states have joined the Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free, a unique coalition of governors, governors' spouses, federal agencies, and public and private organizations working to prevent the use of alcohol by children 9 to 15 years of age. It is the only national effort that focuses on this age group. The initiative is alerting the nation to the critical public health problem of underage drinking, mobilizing

stakeholders, and promoting evidence-based public policy initiatives; now, therefore, be it

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

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