

National Alliance to Prevent Underage Drinking

1875 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20009-5728

March 10, 2008

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,
Education
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
131 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,
Education
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
131 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Specter:

We are writing to respectfully request that you support full funding for the underage drinking prevention activities authorized by the Sober Truth on Preventing (STOP) Underage Drinking Act, Public Law 109-422, in the FY 2009 appropriations process.

Underage drinking is a critical public health and safety issue, particularly for children and adolescents. Each year about 5,000 people under age 21 die from injuries involving underage drinking. Approximately 1,900 (38%) of those deaths involve motor vehicle crashes, about 1,600 (32%) result from homicides, and about 300 (6%) result from suicides. Every day, 7,000 children under the age of 16 take their first alcoholic drink. Adolescents who begin drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence as an adult than those who wait until age 21. Each additional year of delayed drinking onset reduces the probability of alcohol dependence by 14%.

Passage of the STOP Act in December, 2006 represented a bi-cameral, bi-partisan effort to combat underage alcohol use and abuse. Thanks to the Subcommittee's support, these programs were partially funded in the FY 2008 appropriations cycle at the level of \$5.4 million* out of the total \$18 million authorized. It is essential that STOP Act programs be continued and fully funded in FY 2009 to make a significant national commitment to reducing and preventing underage drinking.

Unfortunately, the President's budget for FY 2009 would zero-out funding for those critical prevention programs, just as they are getting started. Please reject these proposed cuts and ensure that the provisions of the STOP Act are fully funded in FY 2009 at the following levels and to the following agencies authorized in the STOP Act:

* Including the 1.75% across-the-board cut that applied to all FY 2008 funding. FY 2008 funding for STOP Act programs included \$4 million for community enhancement grants to local Drug Free Communities coalitions; \$1 million for the national adult oriented media campaign and \$500,000 for the Interagency Coordinating Committee.

Working Together at the Federal Level to Reduce Underage Drinking and its Harms....

Department of Health and Human Services:

- Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Prevention of Underage Drinking; Annual Report on State Underage Drinking and Prevention and Enforcement Activities: **\$1 million**

Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA):

- National adult-oriented media campaign to prevent underage drinking: **\$1 million**
- Community-based Coalition Enhancement Grants to Prevent Underage Drinking for Current or Past Drug Free Communities Grantees: **\$5 million**

Department of Education:

- Grants Directed at Preventing and Reducing Alcohol Abuse at Institutions of Higher Education: **\$5 million**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institute on Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse (NIAAA):

- Expansion of research capabilities to capture new surveillance data on underage drinking: **\$6 million**. Within these amounts, not less than one-third should be provided to the Centers for Disease Control to develop and continue its work to monitor and report on youth exposure to alcohol advertising.

The STOP Act is a critical component of our nation's strategy to keep our children and adolescents alcohol and drug-free. Please ensure that underage drinking prevention activities authorized by the STOP Act are fully funded at a level of \$18 million in the FY 2009 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriations bill. Should you need further information, please contact Kim Crump of the Center for Science in the Public Interest at (202) 777-8338 or Kelly Lieupo of the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America at 703-706-0560 ext. 241.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this important request.

Sincerely,

**American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for the Surgery of Trauma
American College of Preventive Medicine
American College of Surgeons
AO North America
Brain Injury Association of America
Coalition for American Trauma Care**

Center for Science in the Public Interest
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)
Consumer Federation of America
The General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church
Governors Highway Safety Association
Institute for Public Strategies
Legal Action Center
The Marin Institute
Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)
New Mexico Traffic Safety Bureau
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Families in Action
Orthopaedic Trauma Association
Physicians and Lawyers for National Drug Policy
The Seventh Day Adventist Church
Society for Adolescent Medicine
The Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission
State Associations of Addiction Services (SAAS)
Youth Leadership Institute

Clayton Community Alliance for Healthy Kids, Clayton (MO)
Hannibal Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Hannibal (MO)
Hickory County Health Department, Hermitage (MO)
Knox County Coalition Against METH, Knox County (MO)
Lee's Summit CARES, Lee's Summit (MO)
Livingston County C2000 Team, Chillicothe (MO)
MADD Gateway Affiliate, St. Louis (MO)
Missouri Association of Community Task Forces, Jefferson City (MO)
Missouri DARE Training Center, Jefferson City (MO)
Missouri Recovery Network, Jefferson City (MO)
Missouri's Youth/Adult Alliance, Jefferson City (MO)
Morgan County Health Center, Versailles (MO)
Mount Vernon C2000 School and Community Drug Advisory Council, Mt. Vernon (MO)
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, St. Louis (MO)
Phillips County Coalition for Healthy Choices (MT)
Prevention Alliance of Randolph County, Moberly (MO)
Scott City R-1 Advisory Students, Scott City (MO)
Southeast Missouri Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition, Cape Girardeau (MO)
Southeast Regional Support Center, Cape Girardeau (MO)
Youth With Vision, Kansas City (MO)
Van Buren Youth and Community Center, Van Buren (MO)

*** National organizations in bold.**