

CALCAP, ANEF & CCAGE

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 3 JULY 2011



CELEBRATE FREEDOM AND “FREE FROM”

Dear Friends of CalCAP, ANEF and CCAGE,

On July 4th our nation celebrated our independence and our heritage of Freedom. I hope that celebration of Freedom is continuing for you as you realize the value of this precious and great gift, a gift assured to us by sacrifices throughout our history and continuing today. However, we know that there are some in our nation, state and communities that neither are nor

“Free From” the problems of alcohol, other drugs and gambling.

Those whose lives are chained and enslaved by abuse and addiction are not free, and are condemned to live hopeless lives.

In this newsletter you will find articles on alcohol and marijuana. You will also find a resolution before the Legislature that will prioritize the problem of underage drinking in our state.

Your financial support will help assure that our efforts to break

the chains of abuse and addiction will continue.

I know that this will require commitment and sacrifice. But, if that is the cost of “Free From” for our families, friends and fellow citizens, I hope that together we will pay that price, and continue to rally our society to celebration both Freedom and “Free From.” alcohol, other drugs and gambling.

Rev. James B. Butler
Executive Director

SACRAMENTO UPDATES

Our Legislative Assistant, Fred Jones, and Executive Director Rev. Butler have been monitoring legislation and continue to offer letters and/or testimony of support or opposition on issues related to our causes. This means challenging the moneyed interests of alcohol, pro-marijuana groups, and gambling.

We have been supporting an increase tax on alcohol, supporting a ban on alcohol-energy drinks, op-

posing alcohol sales through “self-checkout”, opposing efforts to de-regulate and legalize marijuana, and opposing internet poker and gambling. We are the only organization that “officially” opposes some of these bills. However, our voice is being heard, and because of your financial support, we will continue to challenge alcohol, other drugs and gambling, and together make a difference.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

SURPRISE, TEENS UNAWARE 2

RESOLUTION ON UNDERAGE DRINKING 2

MARIJUANA IS NOT HARMLESS 3

ANOTHER ALOHOL MYTH BUSTED 4

TEENS UNAWARE OF HEAVING DRINKING PROBLEMS

Downing five or more alcoholic drinks nearly every day is not seen as a big problem for many of the nation's teens, says a recent report from the Partnership at Drugfree.org. According to the report, "When asked if they see 'great risk' in drinking that much, almost half the teens questioned – 45 percent – did not see it as a big deal." The study also showed an upward trend in marijuana and Ecstasy use among young people in grades nine through 12. The average age teens have their first drink was 14. Overall, 68 percent said they'd consumed alcohol.

Where are our teens getting the foolish and mistaken idea that binge drinking is "no big deal?" The answer is clear. The teenage world is dominated by music, television, movies and the social network of the internet, not necessarily in that order. And, in that world alcohol is portrayed as a harmless and acceptable part of life. This attitude is promoted and encouraged by the alcohol industry through advertising and product placement. In the midst of this barrage, we cannot afford to be silent. It is one reason that we are supporters of SCR No.45 (see related article below). Our voices need to be heard!

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO.45

Currently the Legislature is considering a resolution (SCR 45) that will make the prevention of underage alcohol use a priority within our state by engaging in a statewide effort to prevent and reduce underage drinking and its consequences. The intent of this resolution is to raise the concerns that we have regarding the increased use of alcohol by children and youth.

Some of the information included in the thirteen "Whereas" statements of SCR 45 are: 1) the detrimental effects of alcohol on adolescent brain development; 2) the increased risks related to binge drinking; 3) the increase preferences for risky behavior predisposing teenagers to experiment more with drugs and being particularly at risk of developing addictive behavior; 4) that approximately 5,000 young people under 21 years of age die annually as a result of underage drinking, including deaths from motor crashes, homicides, suicides, and other causes; 5) underage drinking is widespread; and 6) that those who begin drinking in their early teens are at greater risk of developing alcohol dependence at some point in their lives.

The resolution concludes with the following:

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.

Although the alcohol industry claims to support efforts to prevent underage drinking, we expect that they will oppose this bill, and attempt to remove the negative statements regarding the underage use of alcohol, even though they are true.



MARIJUANA IS NOT HARMLESS

Although there are some who believe that marijuana is a harmless drug, including some of the legislators in Sacramento, more and more evidence is showing that idea is both dangerous and untrue. Along with mounting medical evidence about the harmful effects of marijuana both physically and psychologically, there is also growing concern regarding the dangers of driving under the influence of marijuana. As reported in a recent article in the *Los Angeles Times*, by award winning writer Ralph Vartabedian, a growing number of fatal car crashes are linked to marijuana use, including “medical marijuana” use.

Below is an excerpt from that article:

“The most recent assessment by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, based on random roadside checks, found that 16.3% of all drivers nationwide at night were on various legal and illegal impairing drugs, half them high on marijuana. **In California alone, nearly 1,000 deaths and injuries each year are blamed directly on drugged drivers, according to CHP data, and law enforcement puts much of the blame on the rapid growth of medical marijuana use in the last decade.** Fatalities in crashes where drugs were the primary cause and alcohol was not involved jumped 55% over the 10 years ending in 2009.

“Marijuana is a significant and important contributing factor in a growing number of fatal accidents,” said Gil Kerlikowske, director of National Drug Control Policy in the White House and former Seattle police chief. “There is no question, not only from the data but from what I have heard in my career as a law enforcement officer.”

As the medical marijuana movement has gained speed — one-third of the states now allow such sales — federal officials are pursuing scientific

research into the impairing effects of the drug.

The issue is compounded by the lack of a national standard on the amount of the drug that drivers should be allowed to have in their blood. **While 13 states have adopted zero-tolerance laws, 35 states including California have no formal standard,** and instead rely on the judgment of police to determine impairment.

Even the most cautious approach of zero tolerance is fraught with complex medical issues about whether residual low levels of marijuana can impair a driver days after the drug is smoked. Marijuana advocates say some state and federal officials are trying to make it impossible for individuals to use marijuana and drive legally for days or weeks afterward.

Marilyn Huestis, a toxicologist and one of the nation's top experts on marijuana at the National Institute on Drug Abuse who is directing several research programs, said she believed there is no amount of marijuana that a person can consume and drive safely immediately afterward.

Supporters of marijuana legalization agree that the drug can impair a driver, but argue that the effects wear off in a few hours. Huestis, however, said research has shown that the effects of marijuana can linger.

Marijuana's main ingredient — delta-9 THC — stays in the blood for an hour or more and then breaks down into metabolites that are both psychoactive and inert. But the impairing effects can linger, even after the THC is no longer in the blood, Huestis said. Because it can be absorbed into body tissue and slowly released for days, Huestis believes that heavy chronic daily users may be impaired in ways that are not yet understood.”



California Council on Alcohol Problems
803 Vallejo Drive
Sacramento, CA 95818

Phone: 916-441-1844
Fax: 916-441-1844
E-mail: calcap@calcap.org

Rev. James B. Butler
Executive Director

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.CALCAP.ORG
WWW.ANEFCA.ORG
WWW.CCAGE.ORG

OUR TASK AND MISSION

The CalCAP family, which includes the California Council on Alcohol Problems (CalCAP), the Alcohol-Narcotic Education Foundation of California (ANEF) and the California Coalition Against Gambling Expansion (CCAGE), is a statewide, faith based organization that seeks to prevent the moral, economic, scientific and social problems caused by alcohol and gambling. This is done through research, education, advocacy and lobbying. Thus, we raise the awareness of these problems among the people, and address the legislature regarding alcohol and gambling issues.

We are funded entirely by gifts from denominations, churches, church groups and individuals. We do not receive any financial support from any governmental agency or political party.

If you would like to be part of our information network, arrange for a program or preaching date, or support our work through-out California, please contact our Executive Director, the Rev. James Butler, or our Sacramento office, at 916 / 441-1844 or calcap@calcap.org. Our Mailing address is 803 Vallejo Way, Sacramento CA 95818.

Because CalCAP is involved in lobbying efforts, donations to CalCAP are not tax-deductible. Donations to ANEF are tax-deductible.

ALCOHOL MYTH BUSTED

A recent study, published in the May 2011 issue of the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, reports that adult supervision of teen drinking – referred to as “harm minimization,” actually leads to more alcohol-related problems, not fewer.

The study was conducted by a team of American and Australian researchers. The study followed more than 1,900 teens in Washington state and Australia, for a two-year period from seventh to ninth grade. During that time, participants answered questions from researchers regarding how often they drank with adults as well as their total alcohol use and alcohol-related problems.

Researchers found that by the time participants reached eighth grade, 67 percent of Australian teens and 35 percent of American teens had consumed alcohol under adult supervision. Once the participants reached ninth grade, 36 percent of Australian teens and 21 percent of American teens had experienced significant alcohol-related

problems such as binge drinking, blackouts, and fights. Whether they were from Australia or America, teens who drank with adults were more likely to drink, period. And, they were more likely to experience harmful alcohol-related consequences by the time they reached ninth grade.

Given their findings, researchers who conducted this study recommend a “no-use” policy for underage youth. Lead researcher Barbara McMorris, Ph.D. of the University of Minnesota said, “Kids need black-and-white messages early on. Such messages will help reinforce limits as teens get older and opportunities to drink increase.”

This study is consistent with a growing body of research that shows “harm minimization” is a myth. **Adult-supervised drinking doesn't translate into responsible drinking among teens.** No amount of drinking is responsible or safe for underage youth. .