

## READERS RESPOND

### Don't tax powdered alcohol, ban it

Regardless of how it is taxed, allowing powdered alcohol, known as Palcohol, to enter the market would be a grave mistake for public health ("Don't ban Palcohol, tax it," May 2).

Should it become available, powdered alcohol will likely end up in the hands, pockets and stomachs of young people based on their documented preference for alcoholic Jello, fruity alcopops and other flavored alcoholic beverages. Powdered alcohol is easily concealable, which will make it more feasible for people who are underage to access and consume.

As a result of these risks, states including New York, Nebraska, Vermont and Minnesota are already moving to ban it, and U.S. Senator Charles Schumer of New York is calling upon the Food and Drug Administration to prohibit the product from hitting store shelves.

Each year, about 4,300 people under age 21 die from alcohol-related car crashes, homicides, suicides, alcohol poisoning and other injuries such as falls, burns, and drowning. The author of the commentary argues that the role of government is to promote growth not deter it. I agree, with one important caveat: There is no room for products that will result in the loss of more young lives.

*David Jernigan, Baltimore*

*The writer is director of the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.*

