



News from  
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(For a digital photo of Congresswoman Roybal-Allard at today's press conference please call the number above.)

***Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard was Joined by Senate and House Colleagues in Introducing "The STOP (Sober Truth on Preventing) Underage Drinking Act"***

Washington, D.C. – Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard was joined by her Senate and House colleagues today in introducing a measure to fund key educational and research initiatives, including a national media campaign, to reduce the prevalence of underage drinking.

The legislation, called "*The STOP (Sober Truth on Preventing) Underage Drinking Act*," is also being sponsored by Representatives Tom Osborne (R-NE), Frank Wolf (R-VA), Zach Wamp (R-TN) and Rosa DeLauro (D-CT). An identical Senate companion bill was introduced today by U.S. Senators Mike DeWine (R-OH) and Christopher Dodd (D-CT).

The measure has been endorsed by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) - which recently presented Congresswoman Roybal-Allard with its 2004 Congressional Excellence Award for her ongoing work to prevent underage drinking - as well as the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth and Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America.

Below is a summary of the measure's provisions followed by the full text of Congresswoman Roybal-Allard's remarks given today at a press conference held in our nation's Capitol Building.

The measure would do the following:

- authorize \$2 million to create an Interagency Coordinating Committee chaired by the Secretary of Health and Human Services to coordinate the efforts and expertise of the Federal agencies that are currently administering programs to combat underage drinking. The Committee would also be required to produce an annual report to Congress on its work, and to prepare an annual update on the efforts of states to reduce underage drinking.
- authorize an additional \$1 million to continue the national Ad Council media campaign, for fiscal years 2005 and 2006, to educate parents about the dangers of underage drinking. Last year, the congresswoman secured \$800,000 in federal funds for the Ad Council to initiate this national media campaign. A typical Ad Council campaign results in an estimated \$28 million per year in donated media from

approximately 28,000 media outlets that print or air the public service announcements at no charge.

- authorize \$10 million to provide states, non-profits and institutions of higher education competitive grants to create statewide coalitions to prevent underage drinking and alcohol abuse by college and university students. Grants would also be made through the Drug Free Communities program to fund underage drinking programs.
- authorize \$6 million for research to assess the health effects of underage drinking on adolescent brain development. The research would also identify the alcohol types and brands most consumed by young people.

Congresswoman Roybal-Allard's statement about the "STOP Underage Drinking Act":

- "Thank you for coming. I am Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard from Los Angeles.
- I am pleased to be here today as part of this bipartisan group committed to combating underage drinking in our country.
- Each and every one of these members and their staffs are to be commended for their many hours of hard work in crafting this important bill.
- On the House side, Chairman Frank Wolf, Congressman Zach Wamp, Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, and Congressman Tom Osborne and I have been working for several years to draw attention to the crisis of underage drinking and the best ways to combat it. (I am particularly disappointed that Frank Wolf could not be with us today, because he has really been the Republican leader on this issue on the House side.)
- On the Senate side, Sen. Dodd and Sen. DeWine have been welcome partners in this effort.
- Their active participation has helped us realize some significant accomplishments.
- Among those accomplishments was the release last fall of a landmark study on underage drinking by the Institute of Medicine.

- This study outlined the extent and effects of underage drinking and provided us with a credible and comprehensive strategy on how to address this health crisis.
- Another accomplishment was the initiation of a national media campaign.
- In this effort, we worked with the Appropriations Committee, using the IOM study as a guide.
- This national media campaign will be directed at adults based on the IOM study that found that parents underestimate the use of alcohol by their children.
- For example, the study found that adults were unaware of the fact:
  - that drinking drivers under age 21 are involved in fatal crashes at twice the rate of adult drivers;
  - that underage drinking has a strong correlation with violence, risky sexual behavior, poor school performance and suicide;
  - and that youth who begin drinking before the age of 15 quadruple their chance of becoming alcoholics.
- The planning for this important campaign is now underway by the Ad Council.
- Another of our accomplishments achieved through the Appropriations Committee was the formation of an Interagency Council to Prevent Underage Drinking.
- This council, for the first time, brings together all federal agencies with jurisdiction over issues related to underage drinking.
- This collaboration will facilitate the development of a unified strategy to more effectively address underage drinking.
- Today's introduction of the STOP Underage Drinking bill in the House and the Senate is the next big step in our campaign to combat our nation's underage drinking crisis.

- My congressional colleagues and I have had many partners in this effort who have worked collaboratively with us to produce this bill.
- I take this opportunity to thank the consumer and public interest groups, the health officials in the Bush Administration, and representatives from the alcohol beverage industry for their valuable input during our many months of weekly meetings.
- As with all legislation, however, we have no doubt that some will say our bill doesn't go far enough...while others will say our legislation goes *too* far or is premature.
- We, however, believe the STOP Underage Drinking bill is a significant step towards addressing this health crisis.
- Let me briefly highlight some of the key provisions of our bills:
- First, based on the best scientific evidence, we lay out the astonishing statistics about underage drinking and its costs to society.
- We make permanent the Interagency Council and mandate an extensive annual report to track our efforts in combating underage drinking.
- We also make permanent the National Media Campaign.
- Our bill establishes a "report card" to track states' efforts in dealing with underage drinking.
- And we establish enhancement grants to give states and community organizations additional resources targeted at underage drinking.
- Under the leadership of Congressman Tom Osborne, we also tackle the important problem of underage drinking at colleges.
- Last, but not least, we provide new funds for additional research that will permit us to fully understand and document the effects of underage drinking, such as:
  - the short-term and long-range impact of alcohol use upon adolescent brain development,

- more precise surveillance data, such as the type and quantity and brand preferences of underage drinkers.
- The research will help reveal community-based strategies that are proven to be the most effective for combating underage drinking.
- We have also included a “sense of Congress” provision, to inform the entertainment industry, the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) and higher education institutions, what they can do to assist in this effort.
- As I mentioned earlier, there may be differences of opinion about the bill.
- But there is one thing we all agree on: a successful campaign against underage drinking in this country must be a collaborative responsibility involving all levels of government, consumer groups, health groups, the entertainment industry, and most importantly, the alcohol industry itself.
- That is why we are proud of the fact that during the last few years, we have made significant progress toward addressing underage drinking by building bridges of understanding between the many diverse stakeholders of this issue -- an issue that, in fact, touches all of our lives in one way or another.
- By continuing to work together, I am confident we will successfully confront the health crisis of underage drinking and reduce the terrible toll it is taking on our youth and on our nation’s future.

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