

Lowering the Drinking Age

The debate concerning the drinking age started in the 1970's but today there is more controversy about this topic whether to lower it from the age of 21 to 18 more than ever.

The United States has the highest drinking age in the world. The drinking age in most countries ranges from 16 to 18 years of age and other countries such as China, Vietnam, and Portugal, a drinking age is nonexistent. Since it has been that way for so long, it has been accepted as a part of everyday life therefore alcohol isn't abused as much as it is in the U.S. People are concerned that if the U.S. drinking age were to be lowered to 18, there would be more substance abuse but only because Americans aren't used to the concept of casually drinking. Which may be true for the most part, but I think after a while when the hype dies down, most people would be used to the new law. If the drinking age were lowered now, future generations would be raised and taught to respect alcohol, not abuse it.

If men and women are old enough at the age of 18 to vote, get married, purchase firearms, adopt children, smoke cigarettes, and of course die for this country, then I don't understand why they can't be trusted to drink responsibly.

Advocators of the idea of lowering the drinking age have argued that the current restriction has forced underage drinkers to hide and sneak alcohol, making lawmakers and adults responsible, giving them little control. They also debate that the law doesn't reduce underage drinking but rather promote it. According to the federal government, the 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, they found that 85 percent of 20 year old Americans had used alcohol, while two out of five said they had binged (5+ drinks within an hour) in the previous month.

A nonprofit group Choose Responsibility proposes to lower the drinking age but only under the concurrence of required drinking licenses. This, along with mandatory alcohol education, informing people of the truth about alcohol consumption, possibly even taking away its appeal, would keep people safer and it would be up to the individual to make their own choices after attaining this knowledge.

A supporter of this proposal, John McCardell, the president of Middlebury College in Vermont, claims the epidemic of underage and binge drinking is proof the current approach is ineffective. He also said the 21-year-old drinking age, the standard across America for almost two decades, hasn't stopped young people from drinking themselves into the hospital or the grave.