



MADD®

Activism | Victim Services | Education

National Liquor Law Enforcement Association
Underage Drinking Legislative Update

J.T. Griffin

Vice President of Public Policy

History of 21

- April 14th, 1982, President Reagan signs executive order creating a national commission on drunk driving
- Findings include support for establishing a national 21 minimum drinking age
- Pentagon supports drinking age and reports losing a battalion per year to drunk driving fatalities

History of the law

- The **National Minimum Drinking Age Act of 1984** (Title 23 U.S.C. §158) was signed into law on July 17, 1984.
- Under the federal aid highway act, a state not enforcing the minimum age would be subjected to a ten percent decrease in its annual federal highway apportionment.
- In response, all 50 states have adopted 21

2008 Nine State Proposals

- Allowing only Military to Drink:
 - Kentucky
 - Wisconsin
 - Louisiana
 - South Carolina
- Outright Lowering of the drinking age
 - New Hampshire
 - Minnesota
- Ballot Initiatives
 - Missouri
 - South Dakota
 - Vermont (Study)

Montana Democratic Party

- **Platform plank: Dems want to lower drinking age to 18**

It concludes: “The Montana Democratic Party goes on record in support of future legislation to address the double standard military service and the consumption of alcohol by persons under the age of 21.”

The resolution has no immediate impact. It probably would require the Legislature to propose a constitutional amendment to lower the legal drinking age and a public referendum on the issue.

Critics of the resolution said the change could cost the state millions of dollars of federal highway money and the loss of “Democratic union jobs.”

Cost to Montana

- Should Montana pass a law lowering the drinking age, it would cost Montana more than \$37.3 million in FY09 federal highway money.
- Montana is what is known as a donee state, which means they get more federal dollars than what Montana residents pay in federal gas taxes. This is a lot of free money to be giving away

Choose Responsibility

- Summer 2008 opened a Washington D.C. office with the intention of rolling back the federal 21 law

Federal Actions

- “Let me be clear: We will not be revisiting these (21 minimum drinking age) well established and successful laws.”
 - Senator Frank Lautenberg Oct. 25, 2007
Chairman, Senate EPW Sub. On
Transportation Safety, Infrastructure Security,
and Water Quality

Questions??