

SB 438

EXHIBIT NO. 2

Years Ago - Beer tasted like beer, wine tasted like wine and gas stations pumped gas.

DATE 2-18-09

**Now alcohol can taste like soda pop, wine is often a “cooler” and comes in every color about every convenience or grocery store in town.** imaginable at just

BILL NO. SB 438

Years Ago – A party line meant there were two families using the same phone line. Ring tones were standard and wall paper was something you put on your walls.

**Now – Instant text messages alert scores of friends to the location of a “party” with a push of a button. Ring tones and wall paper are something you can download from a beer company’s website.**

Years ago - Game Nights included games like Monopoly and Charades.

**Now - Ping Pong has become Beer Pong and Quarters are not just for putting in a juke box.**

Years Ago – An all-nighter meant we had a big test to study for.

**Now – it’s a “wide awake drunk” achieved from drinking energy drinks laden with caffeine and alcohol.**

When it comes to alcohol, there’s been a shift and it’s happened so gradually that many of us may not have even noticed.

Research is still ongoing about the effects of combining stimulants like caffeine with depressants like alcohol. There is a misconception that the caffeine counteracts the effects of alcohol - but it doesn’t. Kids just stay awake longer and drink more, which puts them at an even higher risk for alcohol poisoning.

Teens purchase more (regular – nonalcoholic) energy drinks than any other age group – Alcoholic Energy drinks come in similar cans and it’s difficult for parents and even some retailers to differentiate between the alcoholic and non alcoholic versions.

You’ve likely heard some of these statistics before:

Montana teens rank among the highest in the nation in binge drinking.

**18 to 20 year olds drivers in Montana had the highest incidence of fatal alcohol related crashes in 2006, and they weren’t even legal to drink in the first place.**

Here in Lewis and Clark County, middle school students tell us they start drinking regularly at a little over age 12 and a half. 40 % of our high school seniors report that they had 5 or more drinks at one sitting some time in the previous two weeks. (That’s called binge drinking.)

When prevention specialists and lawmakers get together and start talking seriously about reducing underage drinking, you might hear a couple of words like access and price. If you reduce a teens access to alcohol, you’ll reduce underage drinking. If you increase the price of the alcohol, you’ll reduce underage drinking.

Two bills have come before the Senate this year aimed at reducing teen access to alcohol. One of them was simply a bill to allow counties, not mandate them, but allow counties to adopt a social host ordinance. Which simply stated is a civil citation given to a property owner who knowingly allows teens to drink on their property. It’s really a common sense bill that sends a clear message to adults and kids. Underage drinking parties are illegal. That bill is currently sitting on the table in Senate Local Government. It sits there under the fear of giving law enforcement too much authority..... yet again. What are we telling our kids when we say we won’t punish those who host underage drinking parties. The kids? They get MIPS regardless.

SB 438 is the second bill to attempt to deal with reducing a teens access, this time to a particular kind of alcohol, while at the same time increasing it’s price, which also makes it less desirable to teens. Two good moves in one bill..... it’s a start. Please support this bill.

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