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SENATE EDUCATION

TRANSIT NO. 1

DATE 3-30-11

BILL NO. HB20

HB 20 Allow Counties to Have Social Host Ordinance

- Auto crashes are the #1 killer of teens and 1/3 of teen driving deaths are alcohol related.
- In 2009 29% of Montana high school students reported riding in a vehicle with a drinking driver during the last month.
- 70% of teens drinkers obtain alcohol from an adult and drink in a home or at an outdoor party.
- Young people who begin drinking before age 15 are 4 times more likely to become alcoholics
- 36% of underage DUI arrests in Flathead County were involved in crashes
- 27 states have state-wide Social Host laws
- In Montana Helena, Billings, Great Falls, White Sulfur Springs, and Townsend have passed Social Host ordinances. Several other cities are in the process, including Havre and Missoula.
- The Montana Prevention Needs Assessment in Lewis & Clark County showed that before social host 87% of high school seniors reported it was easy to get alcohol; after social host only 77% reported it was easy to get alcohol.

The kids who go to underage drinking parties drive home—but sometimes they don't make it home. When they leave the party drunk and head out on the highway they not only risk their own lives, but everyone else they meet on that road. My niece drove away from a party drunk, crashed, and killed her best friend. Other kids don't leave the party alive, they pass out and don't wake up. In Flathead County 38 teenagers lives were saved when the alcohol enforcement team found them suffering from alcohol poisoning and took them to the emergency room.

A friend works with teens who are using alcohol and drugs. He does a Q&A session about parties:

Q (adult): When you plan a party do you get 1-2 beers for each person?

A (teens): No, we get as much as possible. Everyone wants to get drunk.

Q (adult): You build a fire and sit around telling stories and singing songs?

A (teens): No, we play drinking games like beer hunter, brain damage, and shotgun.

Q (adult): You bring your girlfriend because she has a guitar and can lead the singing?

A (teens): No, we hope if she drinks enough she will let us have sex.

Montana has a culture of accepting drinking and driving. These youth are our hope for the future—they are asking for our help to say NO to the adults who allow and even support underage drinking.

I'm a mom. My son was killed by a drunk driver. The worst nightmare for a parent is when the doorbell rings, you greet the deputy or trooper, receive the horrific message, and take a trip to the morgue to see your dead child.

Other adults do NOT have the right to provide alcohol to your children.

We place our children's lives in the hands of party hosts. Please concur with this bill.