Ashley Baugh

HED 355

Debate-closing

March 2011

Should alcohol be further Restricted?

We oppose further alcohol restrictions. There are many reasons that further alcohol restrictions are not necessary, nor do they make sense. Alcohol is already restricted and regulated in many ways. Most communities and businesses regulate the purchase hours/days of alcohol sales; for example, many places do not sell alcohol after a certain time, or on Sundays. Also very few bars stay open past certain times of night. Some communities even choose to be “dry”, no alcohol sales/purchases whatsoever, and they have the right to do so, but to require an entire state or country to adopt such regulations is unfair and would be detrimental to our already unstable economy. The drinking age in the United States is 21, yet an 18 year person can go to the grocery store or gas station and buy chewing or smoking tobacco, energy drinks, lottery tickets and pornography. In addition to these things, an 18 year old can also make the adult decision to get married or to join the military to fight and die for their country, but cannot enjoy a beverage that contains alcohol. We will entrust the safety and future of our nation to 18 year olds, but not allow them to enjoy the freedoms of being an adult with concern to what drinks they put in their body?

I am not even suggesting that we lower the drinking age, or that we remove all restrictions on alcohol sales or consumption, but to make further restrictions does not seem logical. We have already as a country experimented with prohibition; this created more organized crime, as well as damaged the economy by eliminating tax revenue and countless jobs. This is the last thing we need to do in the hard financial times our country is currently facing. Not including distilled spirits, wine and beer alone industry brought in an estimated $330, 538, 896 in tax dollars in 2010, and accounts for over 180,000 jobs in manufacturing, distribution, sales, and marketing.

We enjoy many things that are not basic necessities for life, chewing gum, soda, computer games, movie theatre popcorn, sex, etc…..these things in themselves are not bad, but can be in excess. Ice cream can cause people to be obese. Many people can eat a small bowl on occasion and be fine, we should not make it illegal because some people with eating disorders and little self-control have used it in excess to harm themselves. While we do have a problem with binge drinking and driving under the influence, the focus for laws/education should not be on restricting the existence of alcohol, but rather helping alcohol be accepted in moderation, and teaching people from a young age to be responsible and reasonable about using it. Drinking and driving laws, especially in Illinois have even become stricter, including mandatory suspension of license, possible jail time depending on the offense, mandatory car breathalyzers and high costing fines, not to mention mounds of lawyer fees, and a permanent criminal record. Health Education should continue to focus on teaching young people about the dangers of binge drinking and drinking and driving, but alcohol in itself is not an evil to be rid of. The tax money and jobs alcohol creates would be devastating to our economy if lost, not to mention the extra financial burden to local and federal governments to create and enforce new legislation.

In conclusion we believe that the current alcohol restrictions are appropriate and United States citizens’ personal freedoms concerning it do not need to be imposed upon any further. Prohibition was tried and failed, creating loss of jobs, an increase in black market sales and organized crime. If it was made to be a part of our everyday culture, and not such a taboo like in Europe or other countries, young people may not see “binge drinking” as such a rebellious adventure to undertake. In addition, if our 18 year olds can purchase tobacco and fight in our military, they should be able to enjoy the beverage of their choice at the end of the day, alcoholic or non-alcoholic. Lastly, the negative economic impact that further restrictions would cause would be detrimental to our nation, for tax money and eliminate a staggering number of jobs in an economy that is already struggling with a 9% unemployment rate.

**Q&A/Opposition:**