Dear reader,

California's highest election education official, Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson, recommends using ProCon.org. Thank you Mr. Torlakson!

Some of our latest content includes countries and their drinking age limits (the US is among the most age restrictive of the 138 countries we reviewed), which cell phones emit the most and least radiation (top 20 models for each category), and why the USDA replaced its food pyramid with "My Plate" ("meat" is no longer an essential food group but "protein" is).

Also, some of our older content has been hot lately, including: John Edwards and his views on infidelity (on our archived 2008 election website), the pros and cons of social networking (courtesy of Congressman Anthony Weiner and his use of Twitter), and whether Dr. Jack Kevorkian served the best interests of his patients (he passed away on June 3rd). More details below.

1. Drinking Age: International Guide to Minimum Legal Drinking Ages (MLDAs) in 138 Countries

The United States along with five other countries (Fiji, Indonesia, Micronesia, Palau, and Sri Lanka) have an MLDA of 21 - the highest of any country where alcohol is legal. In Brunei, Gambia, Iran, Libya, and Pakistan, it is illegal to consume alcohol. At least 27 countries have no MLDA at all. See our new charts about MLDAs and alcohol policy throughout the world.


We found this quote for our 2008 presidential election website, and, although the site has been archived, we wanted our readers to be able to read what John Edwards told Katie Couric on Dec. 19, 2007 about politicians who cheat on their wives.

3. California State Superintendent of Education Encourages Use of ProCon.org

Tom Torlakson, the highest elected education official in California, sang our praises in a wonderful testimonial. So did the prior Superintendent of Public Instruction in California. Read those testimonials and others on our Teachers’ Corner page.

4. Cell Phones: 20 highest and lowest radiation cell phones in the US

All cell phones emit radiofrequency radiation, but not all phones emit the same amount. The FCC has set the limit (standard absorption rate: SAR) for cell phone radiation at a maximum of 1.6 watts. Our updated chart lists the top and bottom 20 cell phone models for radiation emissions along with info on how to find SAR levels for any cell phone.
5. Social Networking: Are social networking sites good for our society?

The popularity of social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Classmates.com more than quadrupled from 2005 to 2009. Many users say the sites are good for our society, but others contend that the dangers of social media outweigh the benefits.

Proponents of social networking sites argue that these online communities promote increased communication with friends and family, familiarize people with valuable computer skills, and allow contact with people from around the world.

Opponents argue that social networking sites expose children to predators, increase vulnerability to computer viruses, lower worker productivity, and promote narcissism and short attention spans.

6. Euthanasia: Dr. Jack Kevorkian dead at age 83.

In light of his passing recently, ProCon.org presents two questions about the man who polarized millions around the issues of euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide in the United States:

1. Who was Dr. Jack Kevorkian?

2. Did Jack Kevorkian ethically serve the best interests of his patients?

7. Vegetarianism: Should people become vegetarian?

On June 2, 2011, Michelle Obama unveiled the USDA "My Plate" image representing the five food groups. The new "My Plate" image replaced the previous "Food Pyramid," and renamed its "Meat & Beans" category as the "Protein" category. See the new image on Vegetarian ProCon.org.

8. Teachers and librarians, if you have not already done so, please take two minutes to share your thoughts on ProCon.org by completing our online survey. If you had taken the survey before you used ProCon.org in your classroom, please take the survey again and let us know what you and your students thought about using ProCon.org.

9. If you like what we do, please make a tax-deductible donation to ProCon.org and help keep critical thinking alive. If you can't make a financial contribution, then check out the 20 other ways you can help ProCon.org for free.

We really appreciate your feedback, donations, and referrals to people in the media and grant-making foundations, so please keep them coming.

Thanks as always for your interest in our nonpartisan research.
Sincerely,

Kamy Akhavan
President & Managing Editor, ProCon.org
"Promoting Critical Thinking, Education, and Informed Citizenship"

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