

## The Drinking Age

By Sarah on March 22, 2010 11:19 PM | [15 Comments](#) | [0 TrackBacks](#)

Since the topic of our next paper is an argument, I decided to do one that weighs heavily on any college students mind. I am of course talking about the drinking age in the United States. Read this article that I found online that has some of the pros and cons of lowering the drinking age to 18.

<http://drinkingage.procon.org/>

Leaving bias aside, do you agree with lowering the drinking age or against it? Why?

Post by Brian

**Categories:** [Spring '10 ENGL 015](#)

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Steve Rustad | [March 23, 2010 12:36 AM](#) | [Reply](#)

I believe lowering the drinking age would be beneficial in a couple aspects. First, I feel that the drinking age should be lowered, but to 19 instead of 18. 19 seems more practical because 18 year olds are still in high school and will therefore make it much more accessible to even younger kids. One benefit of lowering the drinking age to 19 would be that there would be less of a disregard for the law. When people openly break the law, through underage drinking, they then become more likely to break other laws, such as drug use. Drinking for most college kids is inevitable, so by making them break the law it is almost creating a basis of belief that the law is not important.

Another reason the drinking age should be lowered is because you are considered an adult at 18. An adult should be able to make their own decisions on whether or not they want to drink. If you are given the power to fight in wars and elect leaders of the country, you should definitely be able to drink a beer.

Finally, lowering the drinking age will make underage drinking more socially acceptable. Although this seems like a bad thought, if kids are taught how to drink in moderation, they will be better off. For example, if it were socially acceptable, drinking at family gathering or parties under the supervision of your parents would make it less of a "cool" thing to do and more importantly teach them how to drink in moderation. This is how drinking is thought of in many European countries and they have less excessive adolescence drinking.

Tyler | [March 23, 2010 12:59 AM](#) | [Reply](#)

After reading the link attached, here is my general take on this situation:

I understand the opposition's point in saying that the 18-year-old range is more likely to get themselves into alcohol related incidents, including very dangerous and sometimes fatal traffic accidents. These events should never have to happen, and yes, it was proven that when the drinking age was 18 in certain states at certain times, the statistics of these accidents increased for our age-group. With that being said...

Not all, but most college students that are UNDER 21 drink anyway, regardless of the restrictions that have been set for them. The law does not stop these students from getting into a car either. While it might be true that accidents and fatalities decreased when the age was raised to 21 in certain states, these statistics are not recent! Driving has changed, and so have the punishments for D.U.I. infractions. I believe lowering the age to 18 would take away that rebellious feel that drinking gives people that are under 21, and although the number of people drinking legally will increase, in time I do believe the number of accidents will decrease. Rules are not made to be broken, and if the rule is

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repeatedly being ignored by a large number of people, I see that as a time for change.

afua a. | [March 23, 2010 1:07 AM](#) | [Reply](#)

I am against the lowering of drinking age to 18. I personally feel this way because I feel like by the age of 18, an individual isn't wise enough to make safe decisions. Also, teens are more likely to abuse alcohol in comparison to individuals at the age of 21 and up. Lowering the drinking age would also give way for teens to drink at an earlier age which will not only affect their academic progress but also their health. In my opinion, the later you start drinking, the better because you decrease your chances for the negative effects associated with alcohol abuse. Overall, I think that an age limit of 21 is appropriate because it is when an individual is adult enough to realize the consequences of binge drinking and finding the balance between how much alcohol is safe to consume.

Clare | [March 23, 2010 7:05 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

It is absurd that in the United States a teenager can go and die for their country in the military, but they cannot walk into a bar and order a beer. In this country, we legally become adults at the age of 18 and that should be across the board, not just for specific things like trials and voting. That is just one reason why I agree that the drinking age should be lowered to 18. When a teen turns 18 they are usually in their senior year of high school. Because they are still at home, a teenager's parents can monitor their alcohol consumption. By the time a person is 21 they are in college and on their own, only being monitored by roommates or friends, who may not be very responsible. There are so many alcohol related injuries because kids come to college with no previous drinking experience. As stated in the article, a lot of alcohol related injuries are due to college kids not wanting to face the legal ramifications of underage drinking. Knowing that there was no possibility of getting into trouble would help teenagers come forward more willingly if they were in a dangerous alcohol related situation. It would be beneficial to lower the drinking age to 18.

Susan | [March 24, 2010 1:42 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

I'm probably in the minority when I say I am against lowering the drinking age. The article brings up many relevant points in both the pro and con side of the argument, but I feel that the cons far outweigh the pros.

The biggest con in my mind is the lack of maturity present in people under 21. I feel like college-aged kids feel like they are more mature than they really are. My dad always says that teenagers are under the impression they are invincible, and as we all should know, we really aren't. We leave high school and enter the college scene with a new found sense of freedom. Some people start to think that since they are no longer at home, they are mature and ready to take on the world. But how are we really supposed to be mature when up until college we've been under the guidance of our parents? College is the first test of our maturity and independence, and the four years we spend here working toward our majors are also four crucial years where we develop a true sense of maturity. While there may be a few people who can come into college and can handle the responsibility of alcohol, I don't think the majority of under 21 year olds have that same sense. If alcohol is legalized for people under 21, then I feel it will be readily abused. I feel like until people really have life experience, they just are not at a level of adulthood where it is not going to become an abused substance.

I also do not support the legalization of alcohol use for under 21 year olds because I fear that it will cause an even more detrimental chain of events. It is probably safe to say that we have a problem controlling alcohol use for the under 21 crowd already. If the drinking age is lowered, then those kids who fall below the drinking age may start to rebel by drinking more. Overall, I worry that if the drinking age is pushed lower and lower, that kids will consequently begin using alcohol at younger ages than if the legal age is kept at 21. And the article Brian posted says that there are negative neurological symptoms associated with alcohol use at an early age--if people begin drinking at younger ages, they are going to be more susceptible to brain defects and developmental deficits. This could ultimately put our society's progression at a stand-still due to all of the mentally inept people.

Brazill Mitchell | [March 25, 2010 5:54 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

I believe that lowering the drinking age is a ridiculous idea. The writer of the article says that the age being at 21 causes younger people to drink in order to seem mature, and that banning people under the drinking age from bars causes them to drink in unsupervised areas where serious injuries often go unreported. People often associate with others who are within a few years of their age range. Thus, alcohol is currently available to people around the age of eighteen because it is supplied by those who are able to buy it legally.

By lowering the drinking age as said, younger people within the social range of eighteen year old's will have more access to alcohol, meaning there will be more unsupervised drinking and more unreported accidents. Furthermore, ages sixteen to eighteen are the most common ages for teens to obtain their driver's licenses. A decrease in the legal age would create a deadly increase in inexperienced/drunk drivers on the road. So a lower drinking age would be an extremely irrational decision, and would have an overall negative effect on the society.

Jeremy | [March 25, 2010 8:29 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

I agree that the drinking age should be lowered. First of all, the fact that the drinking age is now 21 doesn't stop any of us from going out and drinking on the weekends. If the age was lowered, the cops would have a lot less on their hands and could stop dealing with underage drunk kids all night and focus on more important issues. Also, lowering the drinking age would mean that freshmen and sophomores would be able to buy their own alcohol, instead of using risky means to come by it. Some may argue that by lowering the drinking age to 18, it would cause kids to start drinking even younger. While this is a possibility, it is not nearly as likely for 15 year olds to start drinking 3 years from when they're legal, because they still live at home. The website given mentions that a few states lowered their drinking age and car crashes among 18-20 year olds increased dramatically. I don't think that statistic is accurate. I think that kids from nearby states would go to the lowered drinking age states to drink which would cause more accidents. If the entire country was the same age, such dramatic increases probably wouldn't be seen. Overall, I feel that more good than bad would come out of lowering the drinking age.

Cody | [March 25, 2010 9:07 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

Like most people my age that I have spoken with, I am in favor of lowering the drinking age to 18. I agree with many of the pro arguments listed in the article, the most persuasive of which being that many other countries with lower drinking ages have had fewer alcohol related problems than the United States does. I have some personal experience with this argument being that many of my family members live in the UK. In the United Kingdom, it is legal and not uncommon for young children to have experience with alcohol when at home. The age when it is legal to actually purchase alcohol is 18. These gradual and supervised experiences with alcohol make most young people in the UK view alcohol as a normal part of life, and they are less likely to engage in dangerous behaviors. I think it is time for the US to join the vast majority of other nations in the world by allowing its citizens to exercise personal judgment and responsibility.

Mike | [March 26, 2010 12:19 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

This may sound a bit illogical, but I think that if the drinking age was lowered to 18 years, then a lot of the problems associated with it would solve themselves. Now, you may be thinking, "That's illogical. Massachusetts tried lowering the drinking age and drunk-related traffic fatalities increased."

First off, I wholeheartedly believe the main reason why people between the ages of 18 and 20 drink is because of the rebellious and mature feeling of it. I can say this from experience. I have had absolutely no desire to drink in college, primarily because I come from a long line of mixed Irish and Slovak descent with a Catholic theology: drinking (not getting drunk) is essentially part of every holiday (which under law, is legal for individuals under 21 years of age). In short, the reason I don't drink at college is because there's no adventurous feeling with it at all. My grandparents actually encourage it. Enough said.

Back to Massachusetts statistic--the reason why that failed was because it was an immediate change. The rebellious mentality associated with drinking was still there, but 18 year olds could get alcohol legally. It takes time for human nature to adjust to changes in restriction. If you look at European countries that have had drinking ages below 21 for while now, you'll notice that they have lower alcohol related deaths than the US by a long shot.

Recap: lowering the MLDA takes away from the social taboo of drinking, which takes the thrill away from it and consequently makes over indulging less appealing.

Bryant Foster | [March 26, 2010 12:50 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

I think that the drinking age should stay where it is for now. As someone who travels pretty regularly, I've been to other countries where the drinking age is lower and even

nonexistent. These places were not overrun with drunken teenagers and did not have a much higher mortality rate for kids. It would be easy to say that the same thing would happen if we lowered the drinking age in America, but that would not be true. The reason is that the entire culture surrounding alcohol is different in the countries I visited. That isn't to say that America couldn't eventually become the same way, but it would definitely take time. Completely getting rid of the drinking age would cause an enormous increase in drinking because tons of kids would suddenly have a privilege that was only dreamt of previously. I say we should lower and eventually dispose of the drinking age, but it needs to be done gradually. We must wait for the ideas around drinking to change before we change the drinking age.

Jim | [March 26, 2010 1:17 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

My response is even coming to a shock to me, but I think the drinking age should remain at 21 years old. Of course, every 18 year old who enjoys drinking thinks it should be 18, but there would be so many complications. My dad told me about when the drinking age went from 21 to 18 when he was back in his 20's. He said it was out of control, like a pack of starving animals on a food source. The newly legal drinkers got belligerent and caused unnecessary havoc, or at least the majority of them did, and the age limit went back to 21 within 3 years. I wasn't there to witness these events, but I think 21 is a responsible age in the US. Other countries can do whatever, but we're Americans and whatever we have been doing, we're doing it right.

James | [March 26, 2010 1:25 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

ProCon.org says that lowering the drinking age can lead to more moderation and to more responsibility about drinking. It would be more on par with how 18 is the age for coming into adulthood (military enlistment, able to vote, buy tobacco, etc.). But, there could be some disastrous and perhaps tragic consequences with new binge drinkers and more people able to DUI. Academic and drinking problems (like alcoholism) are more likely to develop among younger drinkers. There would be some people in high school that would be able to drink and that could (or will) increase alcohol on the high school campuses and at their events. I am for lowering the drinking age but I would argue that instead of lowering it to 18, only lower it to 19. While there would still be short term consequences (DUI, binge drinking), it would make an effort to keep it out of the high schools and would still lead to the positive effects like moderation and responsibility. There is always going to be underage drinking, and younger people are more likely to binge and drink irresponsibly than older people, but lowering it to 19 will help, in the long run.

Anthony Egan | [March 26, 2010 2:17 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

I believe that the drinking age is set much too high. Just about everything in this country is made so that when you turn 18, you become an adult and are now in charge of your own life. At age 18, you are able to vote, sign contracts, live on your own, and even join the army. If you should be in charge of your own life by age 18, why is it that drinking is still out of the question. Why is it that one can sign over their life to the Army, yet still can not have a drink of alcohol? Some will argue that the reason is to help create a safer environment for the country. What they fail to realize is that by raising the drinking age, all they have done is increase the amount of underground drinking that kids are now partaking in. They drink, and if by chance they drink too much and need serious help, they refuse to call an ambulance due to fear of being caught. The drinking age doesn't make anything safer, it only makes drinking more irresponsible in teenagers and young adults.

Shayan Riahi | [March 28, 2010 1:30 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

I believe in lowering the drinking age to 19. The main reason being that in college campuses around the nation, individuals disregard this federal law all the time. It is extremely difficult to govern underage drinking around college campuses because it is everywhere. A law that cannot be governed undermines the authority of government. If the drinking age were 19, most individuals in college campuses would be allowed to drink and would do so at their own risk, similar to what it is like for individuals who are currently 21. There are still laws in place which deal with open containers, public drunkenness, and of course driving under the influence. To me, these issues create the real problems, not the act of drinking itself. I also strongly believe that if it were legalized, individuals who are of age to drink wouldn't drink as much. Their mindset now is, "We can get drunk now without getting caught, so let's do as much as we can, while we can." If it were legal, the mindset would be "Let's take it easy, it's not like we are going to get in trouble or anything."

