



# PUBLIC POLICY & INFORMATION

Promoting Addiction Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Through Advocacy and Education

## POSITION PAPER No. 7/213th Legislature (2008-09)

### ISSUE:

Establishes the Task Force on Underage Drinking in Higher Education

### BILL NO.

S-2491 (Codey, Turner)

A-3974 (Evans, Wisniewski)

### NCADD-NJ POSITION:

NCADD-New Jersey strongly supports the establishment of a task force to examine, review and make recommendations to decrease underage drinking on college campuses, as well as in high school and middle school, where the behavior begins. The task force cannot fully confront the problems and offer solutions to underage drinking on college campuses without examining the root of the problem, which can be found in high school and middle school.

Therefore, NCADD-New Jersey believes that section 2.f. should be amended as follows:

2.f. study and review all aspects of State law and policies, or lack thereof, relating to underage drinking and the drinking patterns of high school and middle school students, which contribute to the excessive and dangerous underage drinking on college campuses.

As Senate President Richard Codey said, “we’re here to save lives and make campuses safer for all of your kids.” To truly save lives and make New Jersey’s campuses safe, the Task Force needs to not only look at excessive alcohol use and binge drinking on college campuses but needs to develop solutions to curb this behavior before youth reach college. The problems with alcohol that erupt on college campuses have

their roots in high school and middle school.

The students who are drinking and drinking to excess on college campuses in most cases started before they reached college. According to the 2005 New Jersey Student Health Survey of Middle School and High School Students, 79% of all high school students and 88% of seniors have had alcohol in their lifetime, with 20 % having had their first drink before age 13. Even more alarming and interrelated with excessive drinking on college campuses is that over 25% of high school students and nearly half of all high school seniors engaged in binge drinking in the past 30 days.

Therefore, it is important to examine the patterns of drinking in high school and middle school and the policies that have proven or may be successful in curbing underage drinking in this age group. The Task Force will then be equipped to make recommendations that address this long-standing and long over-looked public health problem occurring both on college campuses and in high schools and middle schools.

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