



Gibbons Capitol Report  
October 12, 2006

### **Working Together to Curb Underage Drinking**

In 2005, we were successful in creating new tools to combat underage drinking. The new law took effect a little over a year ago. As lawmakers we work hard to study an issue and pass a law to make things better for the people of Missouri. But too often, we fail to go back and look at the laws we passed to make sure they are working the way we intended them. That's why this fall, with one year of the new underage drinking laws under our belt, I'm sitting down with students, parents, law enforcement, prosecutors, educators and community advocates to see if our new law is having an impact on helping minors say no to underage drinking.

#### **What We Passed**

Senate Bill 402 changed misdemeanor penalties to address both the possession and consumption of alcohol by minors. Under the act, a minor can now be found guilty of a "minor in possession" if he or she is visibly intoxicated or has a blood alcohol content of more than .02. Any minor found guilty of a "minor in possession" can now lose their driver's license for 30 days for a first offense. The measure also prohibits adults from allowing minors to drink on their private property, even if they didn't provide the alcohol for the minors.

#### **The Anniversary**

August 28, 2006, marked the anniversary of the new laws that increased and added penalties on underage drinking that are an attempt to help curb this growing epidemic. The changes are an effort on all fronts – home, school, community and law enforcement, to protect our children and help them say no when they are confronted with underage drinking. Senate Bill 402 was drafted with input from students, parents, community advocates, prosecutors and law enforcement, so it makes sense that we revisit them to examine the success of the new law in helping curb underage drinking, as well as to discuss the ease of its implementation and if there are further steps that may be taken.

#### **A Seat at the Table**

So far we have held two of the nine regional underage drinking roundtables and both proved productive. We've learned of a diversion program in Greene Co. that gives first time offenders an alcohol assessment so students can learn early if they have a problem with drinking and where to get help. Two high schoolers who had been caught

“partaking” at a high school football game were brought by their county sheriff to that meeting. They said they learned a lot about the law and the harm they were doing to themselves, while students with SADD told us in smaller towns they needed more activities to offer to students after school and on weekends to give students a choice to attend parties without alcohol. In Jefferson City a state trooper told us students are looking for a good reason to say no to underage drinking, and whether it’s losing their driver’s license or getting benched in sports, these reasons give students the ability to say no and still be considered “cool.”

Together, we can build on our successes and make sure the provisions we passed, coupled with new ideas, work properly to protect our children. Please join us if you have ideas. The roundtables are being hosted at the nine regional Highway Patrol Headquarters located throughout the state of Missouri. Information on the time and location of the roundtable discussion in your region is listed below.

**Troop C Regional Underage Drinking Roundtable**

1 p.m., Monday, October 16

599 South Mason Road, St. Louis

Counties: Franklin, Jefferson, Lincoln, Perry, Pike, St. Charles, St. Francois, St. Louis, Ste. Genevieve, Warren, and Washington

**Troop E Regional Underage Drinking Roundtable**

2 p.m., Wednesday, October 18

4947 Highway 67 North, Poplar Bluff

Counties: Bollinger, Butler, Cape Girardeau, Dunklin, Iron, Madison, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Ripley, Scott, Stoddard, and Wayne

**Troop B Regional Underage Drinking Roundtable**

11 a.m., Monday, November 13

308 Pine Crest Drive, Macon

Counties: Adair, Chariton, Clark, Knox, Lewis, Linn, Macon, Marion, Monroe, Putnam, Ralls, Randolph, Schuyler, Scotland, Shelby, and Sullivan

**Troop I Regional Underage Drinking Roundtable**

10:30 a.m., Tuesday, November 14

I-44, Exit 185, Rolla

Counties: Crawford, Dent, LaClede, Maries, Phelps, and Pulaski

**Troop G Regional Underage Drinking Roundtable**

2 p.m., Tuesday, November 14

Business US-60 East, Willow Springs

Counties: Carter, Douglas, Howell, Oregon, Ozark, Reynolds, Shannon, Texas, and Wright

**Troop A Regional Underage Drinking Roundtable**

11 a.m., Tuesday, November 28

504 East Blue Parkway, Lee's Summit

Counties: Bates, Benton, Carroll, Cass, Clay, Henry, Jackson, Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis, Platte, Ray, and Saline

**Troop H Regional Underage Drinking Roundtable**

2 p.m., Tuesday, November 28

Business I-29 and US-169, St. Joseph

Counties: Andrew, Atchison, Buchanan, Caldwell, Clinton, Daviess, DeKalb, Gentry, Grundy, Harrison, Holt, Livingston, Mercer, Nodaway, and Worth