

## Letter to the Editor Template

### Version 1 (proactive)

Underage drinking in (city/state) has been inappropriately diagnosed as an unavoidable rite of passage for high school and college students. That's because alcohol producers spend billions each year on sophisticated marketing campaigns tailored to youth, sending the message that drinking is normal and an activity that everyone does. But there is nothing normal about unprotected sex, suicides, assaults, rape, fatal car crashes and negative health consequences caused by underage drinking.

(Name of local coalition) is encouraged by the new report from the National Academy of Sciences and Institute of Medicine (IOM), which shows that the community's permissive and accepting attitude towards underage drinking is dead wrong and attempts to reverse the epidemic with a common sense roadmap for prevention.

To truly reduce the influence of alcohol on (city/state) youth, we need to tackle the problem on multiple fronts. We must curb access to alcohol by increasing penalties for merchants who sell to kids and enacting stronger penalties for adults who knowingly provide alcohol to minors. Because youth are especially price sensitive, increasing the alcohol taxes is an effective way to put booze out of reach.

[FOR SPACE PURPOSES, USE EITHER THE ABOVE OR CHOOSE TO HIGHLIGHT OTHER METHODS BASED ON LOCAL NEEDS, LIKE:

- We need to restrict alcohol advertising.
- Like anti-smoking advertising, we need a sustained counter-marketing campaign that broadly reaches youth with more realistic messages about drinking and its consequences.
- We must have keg registration.
- We need to reach out in culturally competent ways to youth of color.]

(city/state) needs to mobilize locally to protect our community's youth from an industry that profits from selling them a deadly product.

Sincerely,

(name of coalition director or chair)  
(coalition name)

Version 2 (reactive to other coverage )

Re: [Date]'s "[article headline]": We applaud the coverage of the new report by the National Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Medicine on underage drinking and its causes which shows that society's permissive and accepting attitude towards underage drinking is dead wrong and attempts to reverse the epidemic with a common sense roadmap for prevention.

To truly reduce the influence of alcohol on (city/state) youth, we need to tackle the problem on multiple fronts. We must curb access to alcohol by increasing penalties for merchants who sell to kids and enacting stronger penalties for adults who knowingly provide alcohol to minors. Because youth are especially price sensitive, increasing the alcohol taxes is an effective way to put booze out of reach.

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Sincerely,

(Coalition director or chair)  
(Coalition name)

*Prepared by the Reducing Underage Drinking through Coalitions initiative at the American Medical Association and funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
[www.alcoholpolicysolutions.net](http://www.alcoholpolicysolutions.net)*

