

Should the Drinking Age be lowered from 21 to 18?

Yes! At the age of 18, you are considered mature enough to make a wide array of important decisions about your life, your health, your safety, and almost everything else. You can't, however, make the choice of whether or not to drink an alcoholic beverage. You must turn 21 before you'll be awarded that right. As of November 5, 2007, over 645 soldiers under the age of 21 were killed in Iraq since the war began in 2003. They sacrificed their lives to protect our freedom, yet we denied them, and all those their age who could just as easily enlist and join that fight as well, the right to not be treated as second class citizens. Supporters of the current drinking age assume everyone under 21 is immature and would not drink responsibly. The truth is, people aged 18-20 all lead very different lives. Some are college students, but others are soldiers, firefighters, paramedics, parents, business owners, and a myriad of other roles. To assume these legal adults should be forbidden to drink something simply because of their age is discrimination. Also, statistics show that it is people aged 45-60 who have the highest rates of drunk driving and alcohol abuse, so there is absolutely no reason for such a high drinking age.

Hasn't raising the Drinking Age to 21 saved thousands of lives?

There is really no way of knowing for sure. Supporters of 21 claim it works because there was a decrease in overall traffic fatalities following its implementation in 1984. However, many other changes took place during that time period which may have had a greater role in people being safer on the road. There was increased awareness of the dangers of drunken driving. Seatbelts were more widely used. New cars came with more advanced safety features. It is absurd to pick out only one change out of very many, in this case raising the drinking age to 21, and assume it alone was responsible for a decrease in fatalities. We saw this decrease even in states whose drinking ages were already 21 before it was federally mandated. Also, while there was a decrease in alcohol related deaths among 18-20-year-olds, there was an increase among 21-24-year-olds. This suggests that rather than saving lives, the risen drinking age merely shifted the fatalities to a different group. It also suggests that if we are to remedy a problem of alcohol abuse, we must educate people to use it safely instead of just assuming they won't if they haven't reached a certain birthday.

Can under-21 brains handle alcohol consumption?

They can handle the alcohol no better or worse than an over-21 brain. Remember that the USA has the highest drinking age in the world, with only Malaysia, Ukraine, South Korea, and a couple of other countries also setting a 21 drinking age. In the rest of the world, it is lower, and some don't even have drinking ages or at least don't enforce them nearly as strictly as Americans do. Also, even in the USA, the vast majority of people under 21 have consumed alcohol (which means the drinking age doesn't even work!). So the assumption that under-21 drinking damages a still-developing brain not only cannot be proven, but would imply that a large portion of the world's population is mentally damaged from alcohol!

What can we do to help lower the Drinking Age?

Write to your congressmen, senators, and other elected officials and tell them you want the drinking age lowered to 18. Get your friends and family to do the same. Talk to people about it. Send letters to the editor to your local newspaper. Start a NYRA chapter at your school or in your community to start a campaign to lower the drinking age.

Please be safe and responsible!

Even though we at the National Youth Rights Association are working to lower the drinking age, we ask that you please drink responsibly if you choose to drink at all, no matter how old you are. Alcohol can be enjoyable in moderation, but it is still a dangerous substance with serious risks if you are not careful, and this is true whether you're 18 or 28 or 58. Never drink more than you can handle. If you aren't feeling very well, stop drinking. Do not drink and drive under any circumstances. Get a designated driver. If you or a friend may be suffering from alcohol poisoning, get medical attention immediately. Sadly, many underage drinkers have died from alcohol poisoning because they wouldn't get medical attention for fear of getting into trouble with the law for underage drinking, and it is all the more reason to lower the legal drinking age.

We believe you and you alone are the one to make decisions regarding your own alcohol use, no matter what the legality of the act for someone your age. We ask that, like all other things in life, you recognize the risks and make smart decisions about alcohol to keep from endangering your life and the lives of others. Thank you.

To find out more about the Drinking Age and how you can help, please visit our website at <http://www.youthrights.org>

GET INVOLVED!

Want to join the excitement of the youth rights movement? The National Youth Rights Association exists to promote and protect the rights and dignity of our young citizens, with goals such as lowering the voting age, lowering the drinking age, ending youth curfew laws, defending students' rights, and a variety of other activities.

Visit us online!

<http://www.youthrights.org>

On our website, you can find ways you can get involved, learn more about us, join, donate, visit our active message board and get to know other NYRA members, read youth rights news on our blog, buy something from our store, and so much more!

National Youth Rights Association
1133 19th Street, NW, 9th Floor
Washington, DC 20036

LOWER THE DRINKING AGE!



www.youthrights.org