

4th Grade Persuasive Essay Example

Why the Drinking Age Should Not Be

Lowered

Alcohol belongs in the category of psychoactive substances one can legally buy in almost any country, according to certain criteria. Most often, this criterion is age; in the majority of cases, it is set to 21 years. However, in a number of countries, such as Australia, China, and Russia, it is set to 18 (ICAP). In the United States, calls for lowering the drinking age have sounded for a rather long time; considering that alcohol can lead to unpredictable behavior and other negative social consequences, the drinking age should not be lowered.

One of the first associations that come to mind when talking about alcohol is driving. For citizens of the United States, having a car is seen as a must starting from the age when a teenager is allowed to receive a driving license. According to data provided by the organization *Mothers Against Drunk Driving*, in 2010, a high percentage of car accidents connected to drunk driving (15.1% out of 10,228 individuals) was observed among young people aged between 18-20 years. Respectively, if youths were officially allowed to consume alcohol from 18 years old, this index of car accidents would necessarily be much higher. Moreover, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration claims that since establishing the drinking age of 21 in 1975, the number of car fatalities among 18-20-year-old drivers in the United States decreased by 13%.

The medical irresponsibility of allowing teenagers to drink alcohol on a legal basis is also obvious to those who have at least a basic knowledge in biology. Consuming alcohol on a

regular basis can negatively affect the development of an individual's brain's frontal lobes, which are responsible for emotional regulation, as well as for planning and organization. Underage individuals who consume alcohol put themselves at more risk of addiction, decreased ability of decision-making, tend to behave less responsibly, and may become violent, depressed, and even prone to suicide.

The "trickle-down effect," well-known to sociologists, is another reason against lowering drinking age that should be taken into consideration. This effect implies individuals who already have a right to legally purchase and consume alcohol tend to buy it for their younger peers. For example, 21-year-old students buy beer or spirits for themselves and for their friends who can be of the age 18-20. In the case of the drinking age being lowered to 18 years, the age of individuals who in fact have access to alcohol will decrease even more, reaching ages of 15-17 or even less. Considering the specifics of adolescence, granting teenagers with a wider access to alcohol can have negative consequences for their health and wellbeing.

Though in a number of countries worldwide the drinking age is 18 years, in the United States, this index is 21, and it should not be lowered. Lowering the drinking age to 18 years old would lead to an increase of car accidents connected to drunk driving; it would also negatively affect youths' cognitive development, clouding their ability to make decisions and plans, and would make them more vulnerable to addiction and other negative effects; due to the "trickle-down effect"

lowering the drinking age would also mean granting access to alcohol to individuals who are younger than 18 years old. It seems this debate in the U.S. will linger on much longer.

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