

WHY WE SHOULD BE CONCERNED

Underage drinking is real and so are the social gatherings where a lot of the drinking goes on. Minors in Georgia can be charged with possession or consumption of alcohol and adults can be charged when caught furnishing alcohol to them.

What happens when law enforcement responds to a drinking party but is unable to determine the supplier of the alcohol? In the case of the individual allowing the party—not a lot. As long as they're not supplying, those individuals have no liability for the minors drinking in their home, even if they know the drinking is happening.

THE PROBLEM

"Alcohol use by persons under the age of 21 is a major public health problem. Alcohol is the most commonly used drug among youth in the United States, more than tobacco and illicit drugs, and is responsible for more than 4,300 annual deaths among underage youth."¹

THE COST TO YOUTH

The brain goes through dynamic change during adolescence (ages 12 to 21) and alcohol can seriously damage long- and short-term growth process.³



BRAIN CHANGE

Youth who start drinking before the age of 15 are five times more likely to develop alcohol dependence or abuse later in life than those who begin drinking at or after the age of 21.¹

Over the past decade, about 35 states have passed "social host" laws. Currently all contiguous states to Georgia (AL, FL, MS, SC & TN) have such laws. Research reports social host laws, in general, as among the most effective forms of public policy in reducing binge drinking and drinking and driving.



THE COST TO THE STATE

Underage drinking cost the state over 1 billion dollars in 2013.²

Youth Alcohol Violence

\$662.2 MILLION

Youth Property Crime

\$6.2 MILLION

Youth Traffic Crashes

\$228.7 MILLION

Youth Injury

\$58.2 MILLION

Youth Treatment

\$30.8 MILLION

5X more likely
for alcohol dependence

35 states
already have laws

1. Source: CDC (<http://cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/underage-drinking.htm>)

2. Source: UDETC (<http://udetc.org/factsheets/GA.pdf>)

3. Source: AMA (<http://alcoholpolicymd.com/pdf/brain3.pdf>)



DON'T BE A PARTY TO UNDERAGE DRINKING

ISN'T UNDERAGE DRINKING ILLEGAL ?

Yes, but there are gaps in the current laws. Currently, the youth can be charged, but the adult cannot be held accountable, even if that person actively allowed the underage drinking party.

SOCIAL HOST ACCOUNTABILITY

To fill in the gaps, social hosts should be held accountable if they know or allow underage drinking to occur on property that they own, lease, or otherwise control. Furthermore, they should not have to be present on the property in order to be held accountable.

WHY AREN'T OUR CURRENT LAWS ENOUGH?

- » "Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor" (O.C.G.A. §16-12-1) is when a person causes or encourages a minor to commit a delinquent act (like drinking alcohol). Unless it can be proven that the adult directly caused the underage drinking, the adult is not liable. Also, this statute only covers youth under 17.
- » A person commits the offense of "Furnishing Alcoholic Beverages to a Minor" (O.C.G.A. §3-3-23) when he or she furnishes, causes to be furnished, or permits any person in their employ to furnish alcohol to a minor. Unless the adult directly gives to said minor, he or she is not liable.
- » The "reckless conduct statute" (O.C.G.A. 16-5-60a) only applies to someone who causes bodily harm or endangers the safety of another person. Simply allowing an underage drinking party does not apply.

