



FEBRUARY 2012 NEWSLETTER

2012 Issue Briefs Focus on Alcohol Regulatory Issues



For the second year, the Campaign for a Healthy Alcohol Marketplace is pleased to offer *Issue Briefs* – concise, easy-to-understand summaries that address common alcohol regulatory issues.

Given the budget difficulties among state and local governments, alcohol is often a target for additional revenue. Some proposals would greatly increase alcohol availability. Others would allow aggressive sales practices that promote purchase in high volume at discounted prices. Deregulation advocates claim that longstanding policies designed to limit availability and prevent steep discounts are antiquated, ineffective and hurt consumers. This year Washington State will greatly deregulate wine and spirits thanks to a recent ballot measure sponsored by the Costco Corporation. Public health officials, citing credible research, advise against such deregulation.

Alcohol regulations are designed to balance availability, price, and promotional practices. Our regulatory systems also provide cost-effective tax collection and protection from dangerous products. They work to curb problems with underage drinking, public disorder, and excessive consumption. Most alcohol regulatory systems aim to foster moderation in alcohol consumption. Ironically, Washington State's deregulation initiative specifically deleted moderation as a goal!

These briefs, designed for policymakers, media members and others, underscore the importance of comprehensive alcohol regulations that level the business playing field and, ultimately, help ensure public health and safety. Among the new topics covered this year: the effectiveness of the "three-tiered system" of regulation in eliminating counterfeit alcohol in the U.S.; and the case against lower alcohol prices.

Here is a full rundown of *Issue Briefs*:

1. Aren't our alcohol regulations antiquated? Weren't they designed to prevent organized crime and other problems of Prohibition?
2. Why do we need regulations to balance our alcohol market systems?
3. Since alcohol is a legal product, why can't it be sold like orange juice or any other legal product?
4. What are some real-world examples of what happened when alcohol was deregulated?
5. Since the recession, all Americans expect good values, so what's the problem with lower prices for alcohol?
6. Why shouldn't alcohol be more convenient for customers to buy? Shouldn't those who drink exercise personal responsibility?
7. What is the problem with allowing more stores to sell alcohol?
8. Why shouldn't we be able to buy alcohol on Sundays, holidays, or any hours of the day or night?
9. Why are beer, wine and spirits regulated differently?
10. What are the benefits of a three-tiered system of alcohol controls?
11. Why don't we have problems with fake alcohol?
12. Why are some states in the liquor business?
13. In summary, what does a good alcohol regulatory system look like?
14. Isn't alcohol regulation bad for business? Shouldn't we loosen alcohol regulations to help local businesses?

These briefs are designed to stand alone and be used as educational tools. PDFs may be downloaded for use. Please contact Pamela S. Erickson, at pam@pamaction.com, if you have questions or would like a customized version of a particular brief.

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