

Summary of House Bill 896/ Talking Points

HB 896 is an amendment to Code Section 3-3-23 and Chapter 1 of Title 51, which pertains to furnishing, purchasing and possession of alcoholic beverages among individuals under the age of 21.

What will the amendment do?

1. Holds the social host (person that exercises control over the property, vehicle or vessel) responsible if a person under the age of 21 consumes any alcoholic beverage regardless of the source of the beverage.
2. Provides parents/guardians with the right of action against the person that provides or allows underage child to consume alcohol without the parent's consent.
3. May hold the person that sells, furnishes, serves or allows a minor (under the age of 21) to consume alcohol liable for injury or damage that is a result of intoxication.

Justification for HB 896

- **Alcohol is the number one drug used by our Georgia teens.** Private parties have repeatedly been identified as the primary source by which minors obtain alcohol; frequently lacking adult supervision and often a source of other drug use, risky sexual behaviors, violence and vandalism. Georgia Student Health Survey 2.0, 2014, (<http://www.gadoe.org>)
- **In 2013, the cost to citizens of the State of Georgia was \$1.2 billion. Of that:**
 - Youth violence - \$622.2 million
 - Youth car crashes - \$228.7 million
 - Youth injury - \$58.2 millionUnderage Drinking Enforcement Training Center
(<http://www.ccapsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Cost-of-Drinking-GA-2013final.docx-GA.pdf>)
- **In the past decade, about 35 states have passed "social host/teen party" laws. Currently all contiguous states to Georgia (AL, FL, MS, SC & TN) have such laws.** Current research reports social host laws in general as among the most effective forms of public policy in reducing binge drinking and drinking and driving.
- **Under current laws in Georgia, unless adult can be proven to have directly given alcohol to said minor, he or she is not liable.** Georgia State Law O.C.G.A. 3-3-23 & 3-3-5 provides a "parental exception" which allows alcohol consumption by a person under age 21 under certain conditions; when the parent or guardian of the person gives the alcohol to the person while in the home of the parent or guardian and while such parent or guardian is present. Georgia law does not allow parents to give alcohol to their children's friends who are under age 21, under any circumstances, even in their own home, even with their parent's permission. **A new social host/teen party law would also help clarify the "parental exception" in Georgia's current underage drinking law.**
- **Enacting this law would encourage parents to take steps to prevent teenage drinking parties while they are away thus helping to reduce harms, crimes and costs attributed to underage drinking.**
- **Data supports that when evidenced based strategies such as social host/ teen party laws are enacted, lives are saved, community safety is improved and taxpayer dollars are saved.**