



*Nothing is politically right
that is morally wrong.*

MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

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is the firmest friend of truth.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Senate Sends Legislation Increasing
Underage Drinking Penalties to the House**

JEFFERSON CITY – The Senate third read and gave final approval today to legislation increasing and adding penalties on underage drinking. Senate President Pro Tem Michael R. Gibbons, R-Kirkwood, sponsored the measure concerning underage drinkers in Missouri as an attempt to help curb the growing epidemic.

“Every student in Missouri is going to be confronted with underage drinking,” Gibbons said. “These changes are part of an effort on all fronts – home, school, community and law enforcement, to help them say no when that day comes.”

Gibbons said he was alarmed when he learned that students who abuse alcohol are increasingly drinking more heavily. Four out of five Missouri high schoolers acknowledged having tried alcohol and one out of three admit to being binge drinkers.

Senate Bill 402 changes misdemeanor penalties to encompass both the possession and consumption of alcohol by minors. Under the act, a minor could now be found guilty of a “minor in possession” if he or she is visibly intoxicated or has a blood alcohol content of more than .02.

The measure also prohibits adults from allowing minors to drink on their private property unless they are the minor’s legal guardian.

“From traffic accidents to high-risk sex, teens are all more susceptible to these poor choices under the influence of alcohol,” said Gibbons. “We have to start by protecting our children at home and reinforce that effort in our schools and communities.”

Gibbons said students testified that a good deterrent of abusing alcohol would be losing access to participate in school activities. In response to that, the measure requires school districts to create a policy detailing the consequences of any student found either possessing or drinking alcohol whether on or off school property.

The bill now moves to the House where it will receive similar consideration. If passed by the House, it will move on to the governor to await his signature to become law.

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