



*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 President Pro Tem Michael Gibbons Introduces
Legislation to Help Curb Underage Drinking**

JEFFERSON CITY – Senate President Pro Tem Michael R. Gibbons, R-Kirkwood, introduced legislation today that creates new penalties concerning underage drinkers in Missouri as an attempt to help curb a growing epidemic. A shocking four out of five Missouri high schoolers acknowledged having tried alcohol and one out of three admit to being binge drinkers.

This past fall, Gibbons served as chairman of the Joint Interim Committee on Underage Drinking which was charged with studying the expanding problem. The members of the committee released a final report in November that recommended ways to combat the underage drinking dilemma. Gibbons' legislation draws from those recommendations.

“As chair of the Joint Interim Committee on Underage Drinking we learned that, surprisingly, what teens see at home shapes their decisions even more than peer pressure when it comes to alcohol,” Gibbons said. “That’s why we have to squelch the notion of house parties that are parent sponsored or approved. Protecting our children must start at home.”

SB 402 prohibits adults from allowing minors to drink on their private property. The measure also changes misdemeanor penalties so they 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.

“When a young person takes a drink, they are opening themselves up to poor decision-making and, potentially, a lifetime of trouble,” Gibbons said. “From traffic accidents to high-risk sex, teens are all more susceptible to these poor choices under the influence of alcohol.”

The bill also suspends a minor’s driver’s license for 90 days for a first offense, and a year for any further offenses. It also requires minors caught drinking under the age of 16 wait an additional six months before being able to get their license.

Co-sponsors of the measure include Senate Minority Leader Maida Coleman, D-St. Louis; Sen. John Griesheimer, R-Washington; and Sen. Pat Dougherty, D-St. Louis. These senators, along with Gibbons, consisted of the Senate members on the Joint Interim Committee on Underage Drinking.

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