



Student Government

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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AR 42: In Support of Choose Responsibility and the "Get Real" Initiative

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Sponsors: Representatives Nathan Bunch, Carly Castetter, Alex Ferraro, Madison Gardner, Steven Gohlke, Alex Greenberg, Andy Jones, John Lawler, Tarryn O'Dell, Tyler Rosen, Jimmy Talarico, John Woods, Thaddeus Woody

WHEREAS 72.3 percent of students at The University of Texas at Austin have reported consuming one or more alcoholic beverages in the last thirty days;ⁱ and

WHEREAS It is currently illegal for anyone under 21 years old to consume or possess alcoholic beverages; and

WHEREAS Despite the law, large numbers of young people under 21 are drinking, and often they are drinking heavily; specifically, with eighteen to twenty year olds experienced a 56 percent increase in binge drinking between 1993 and 2001ⁱⁱ; and

WHEREAS " 'Binge drinking' is a pattern of drinking alcohol that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 per gram percent or above (this pattern corresponds to consuming five or more drinks for a male, or four or more drinks for a female, in about two hours)ⁱⁱⁱ; and

WHEREAS More than ninety percent of all alcohol consumed by underage drinkers is consumed during binge drinking, and college students experienced a nearly ten percent increase in the rate of drinking to get drunk between 1993 and 2001^{iv}, with 23.8 percent of students at The University of Texas at Austin consuming five or more drinks in one sitting one to two times a week^v; and

WHEREAS 14.4 percent of students reported while under the influence of alcohol being physically injured, 14.1 percent of students reported having unprotected sex, and 34.1 percent of students reported doing something they later regretted^{vi}; and

WHEREAS These disturbing rates of binge drinking and dangerous behavior should serve as a call to action for parents, educators, and lawmakers^{vii}; and

WHEREAS Choose Responsibility is a non-profit organization founded in 2007 by the President Emeritus of Middlebury College^{viii}; and

WHEREAS Choose Responsibility supports a series of changes to treat 18, 19, and 20 year-olds as the young adults the law otherwise says they are, thus allowing eighteen to twenty year-old adults to purchase, possess and consume alcoholic beverages; and

WHEREAS Choose Responsibility proposes a multi-faceted approach that combines education, certification, and provisional licensing for eighteen to twenty year-old high school graduates who choose

to consume alcohol with appropriate incentive and reward for responsible, lawful behavior by adolescents, and punitive measures for illegal, irresponsible behavior^{ix};

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the Student Government of The University of Texas at Austin supports the efforts of Choose Responsibility to create a series of changes to the current state and federal alcohol laws in order to promote responsible and sane alcohol consumption by all adults;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Student Government of The University of Texas at Austin calls upon President Powers to join other university presidents in the discussion of underage and binge drinking on and around college campuses;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Student Government of The University of Texas at Austin calls upon our elected officials to recognize the intended and unintended consequences of the current drinking age and to consider alternatives to the current drinking age that will create a safer environment on college campuses, and better prepare young adults to make responsible decisions about alcohol use;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Student Government of The University of Texas at Austin calls upon President O'Rourke to join the over fifty student government presidents across the country who have signed the "Get Real" Initiative to address this issue;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be sent to the Office of the President, the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Office of the Dean of Students, the Chief of The University of Texas Police Department, the Director of University Health Service, the Director of the Counseling and Mental Health Center, Choose Responsibility, and relevant Student Government Agency Directors.

ⁱ American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment for the University of Texas, Executive Summary, Page 7

ⁱⁱ (<http://www.chooseresponsibility.org/article/view/15551/1/2644/>)

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://healthyhorns.utexas.edu/alcohol.html>

^{iv} (<http://www.chooseresponsibility.org/article/view/15551/1/2644/>)

^v American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment for the University of Texas, Executive Summary, Page 8

^{vi} American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment for the University of Texas, Executive Summary, Page 9

^{vii} (<http://www.chooseresponsibility.org/article/view/15551/1/2644/>)

^{viii} (<http://www.chooseresponsibility.org/about/>)

^{ix} (<http://www.chooseresponsibility.org/proposal/>)