



THE MARYLAND COLLABORATIVE

TO REDUCE COLLEGE DRINKING AND RELATED PROBLEMS

Honorable Dereck E. Davis
Chair Maryland House Economic Matters Committee
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Delegate Davis,

We are writing to strongly urge you to vote in support of H.B. 749 banning the sale of powdered alcohol in Maryland. As members of the Maryland Collaborative to Reduce College Drinking and Related Problems, we are leaders of colleges and universities across the state working together to address the significant public health problem of excessive college drinking. We see a permanent ban on powdered alcohol as an important complement to our efforts.

Each year, nationally, as a result of alcohol, more than 1,800 college students die—that is, five per day; nearly 600,000 are injured; nearly 700,000 are assaulted by another student under the influence; and nearly 100,000 are victims of alcohol-related sexual assault or date rape. Approximately one in five Maryland college students meet the criteria for alcohol dependence or abuse, and a third of our underage college drinkers report having driven with a drinking driver. The Collaborative is building on the best available research evidence to address the multiple causes and consequences of excessive alcohol use among college students.

The sale of powdered alcohol in Maryland would undermine our efforts, and could threaten the lives, health and safety of our students. Powdered alcohol is particularly dangerous because the convenience of the packets could intentionally or unintentionally result in stronger than standard drinks and harmful over-consumption. Moreover, the different flavors and the ease with which the powdered alcohol can be concealed and transported may have particular appeal to underage drinkers.

As of November 2015, 27 states had banned the sale of powdered alcohol, and three more have included powdered alcohol in their statutory definitions of alcohol so that the product can be regulated under their existing alcohol statutes. Another 12 states and the District of Columbia are considering bans. We are pleased that Maryland enacted a temporary ban, and we hope that Maryland will join the ranks of states that have chosen to protect our youth and young adults from the dangers of powdered alcohol.

Our state takes well-justified pride in its commitment to education. Our students come to college with high hopes and dreams. Powdered alcohol could diminish their dreams and endanger their futures. Please vote in favor of H.B. 749 and ban the sale of powdered alcohol in Maryland.

Sincerely,

Chancellor Robert L. Caret
University System of Maryland
Co-Chair, Maryland Collaborative

President Ronald J. Daniels
Johns Hopkins University
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