

May 12, 1993

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Dear Steve,

Normally I think you and C-span do an excellent job. However, you gave short shrift to a phone-in caller during your health care coverage programs. This caller asked about increasing health insurance premiums for alcohol drinkers. You ignored his question and diverted it to premium increases for smokers.

Steve, we cannot keep on ignoring the health care costs of alcohol use which are routinely ignored by the media. \$90 billion a year is what alcohol costs the nation in health care. Please read the enclosed student editorial and enclosed letters to President and Hillary Clinton, etc. In those letters are citations regarding statistics of alcohol use health care costs.

I think the media has a responsibility to publicize all the facts about alcohol use. Thanks you!

[REDACTED]
Sig Halban, WA 98335

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Opinions

Misspelled SADD misguided in programs and principles

Students Against Drunk Driving could be called Simply Aware of Drunk Driving. In celebration of national SADD awareness month, a rejuvenation of the Peninsula chapter has taken place. While this is a positive step the members are, unfortunately, giving a misguided message with a misspelled name.

Instead of telling people not to drive drunk, they should change the organization to Students Against Drinking. This would not only correct their spelling problem but help to solve numerous problems with teenage drinking.

Besides, it is impossible to drive while intoxicated

By telling students not to drive while intoxicated, it is implied that drinking without driving is acceptable.

Outlook

without drinking. By telling students not to drive while intoxicated, it is implied that drinking without driving is acceptable. Alcohol related accidents are the leading cause of death among teenagers. These accidents don't just include driving, but also consist of boating, drowning and unwanted pregnancies which lead to abortions.

When high school students drink, they often drink at large parties in uncontrolled circumstances. They generally don't drink be-

cause they enjoy the taste but because they want to escape their problems. They may fall victim to the mythical syndrome that everybody else is doing it. This type of irresponsible behavior is the precise reason SADD should not just condemn drunk driving but drinking, period.

SADD awareness month only stimulates a short term interest in the behavior of teenagers by teenagers and really has no beneficial effect on the long term. Wearing red ribbons and creating paper chains of life are only superficial actions which only makes us aware of drunk driving. None of this solves the problem. The real solution lies within stopping teenagers from hitting the bottle.

The bottom line is the negative effects of alcohol far outweigh any reason to drink. Future life-styles are usually formed by habits and behaviors established in the formative teenage years. Let's not make drinking a habit in the 21st century.

May 12, 1993

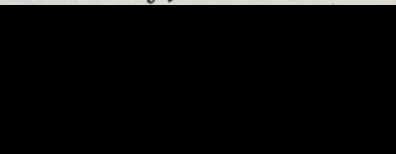
Enclosed is an editorial written by students and published in the school newspaper, The Peninsula Outlook, (Peninsula High School, Gig Harbor, WA.) concerning the use of alcohol. The editorial's contention is that SADD is misspelled and that the message of Students Against Drunk Driving should be changed to SAD, (Students Against Drinking). "SADD should not just condemn drunk driving but drinking, period". These students realize that "the negative effects of alcohol far outweigh any reason to drink" and that the decision to drink alcohol is usually made in the teenage years. Their conclusion is, "Let's not make drinking a habit in the 21st century." (emphasis added)

These teenagers are ahead of most adults in understanding the negative effects that alcohol has on our society. As our country moves toward health care reform and the implementation of taxes to finance these reforms please consider the following facts:

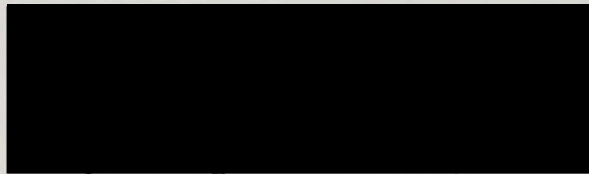
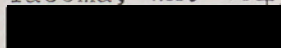
1. Health care costs of alcohol are at least \$90 billion per year (approximately 10% of the national health care bill).
2. In Washington state for every \$1 collected in taxes on beer, wine and distilled spirits in 1990, \$7 in public and private funds were spent to deal with the problems caused by alcohol. (University of Washington study).
3. The leading cause of death among 15 to 24 year olds is alcohol related traffic crashes.

We urge you to lead the way in discouraging the use of alcohol by anyone at any age. Educate the public to the health dangers and social problems caused by alcohol use. Let's let these young people know that we have heard them by taking appropriate action to discourage the use of alcohol.

Sincerely,



Tacoma, WA. 98498



Gig Harbor, WA. 98335



March 1, 1993

The Honorable Bill Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Clinton:

To see Beer Baron, August A. Busch, (head of Anheuser-Busch) prominently displayed at your press conference at The Old Executive Office Building on February 25th was disturbing enough in itself. But to hear you say that taxes should be raised on cigarettes because of their health care costs and then to pointedly ignore mentioning taxes on beer, wine and other alcohol products or the health care costs caused by alcohol use was truly disturbing!

You warned us that the Lobbyists and Special Interest Groups would be swarming the halls of Congress to defeat your recently announced economic plan. You neglected to tell us that the beer and wine merchants would be swarming the rooms of The White House also, in an attempt to influence the President of the United States of America. Unfortunately, these legal, liquid drug merchants seem to have succeeded only too well!

CONSIDER THESE FACTS:

1. Health care costs of ALCOHOL are \$90 billion per year (compared to smoking costs of \$22 billion per year).

"Coming to Grips with the Health Care Crisis" (special section), The Travelers Tribune September, 1991, (publication of The Travelers Insurance Company, Hartford, CT) ., p. 5.

2. Moderate drinking can cause high blood pressure.

"Drinking is the number one cause of high blood pressure. More than 90 percent of high blood pressure patients don't need medication after they have stopped drinking."

Joseph A. Pursch, M.D., Dear Doc: The noted authority answers your questions on drinking and drugs, (Minneapolis, MN CompCare Publications, 1985), p.205.

3. Alcohol is KILLING OUR KIDS!

The following information is taken from the book written by Peter Hernon and Terry Ganey, Under The Influence: The Unauthorized Story of the Anheuser-Busch Dynasty (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991):

- A. The leading cause of death among our young people between the ages of 15 and 24 was alcohol related traffic crashes. (p. 354)
- B. The average child between the ages of 2 and 18 has been exposed to as many as 10,000 T.V. beer commercials. According to a former Anheuser-Busch executive: "They essentially create an environment where every kid in America thinks it's okay to drink beer." (p. 354)

4. Fetal alcohol syndrome, throat cancer, liver, brain, and heart problems are just some of the health risks associated with alcohol use.

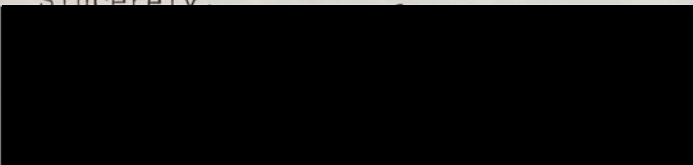
5. "Moderation ads' just another sales pitch" is the title of a recent editorial. [Tacoma, WA] The Morning News Tribune, February 19, 1993.

Unfortunately, beer companies like Anheuser-Busch and the wine merchants have successfully duped most American adults and children, including many members of the U.S. Congress, our President and the First Lady into believing that an addictive, mind-altering drug taken in "moderation" is safe and the "in" thing to do.

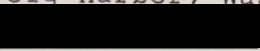
As President of the United States, you and your wife have a unique opportunity to be powerful role models for all Americans, but especially for the children of this great nation. You claim that you are for Putting People First. Then please put Babies Before Booze! (This Busch does NOT belong in the White House).

I sincerely hope that you will decide to put the health and lives of our people ahead of the self-interests of the beer and wine lobbies!

Sincerely,



Gig Harbor, Washington 98335-7613



c: Ms. Hillary Rodham Clinton
 Mr. Ross Perot
 U.S. Senators
 U.S. Members of Congress
 Newspaper Editors
 Talk Show Hosts

March 2, 1993

Ms. Hillary Rodham Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue,
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Ms. Clinton:

I am enclosing a copy of a letter I am sending to President Clinton regarding my concerns about the high costs of health care caused by alcohol use. The letter also reflects my concern about the influence that the beer and wine lobbyists appear to have with the President.

Since you are heading the task force on Health Care Reform, I hope that you will consider the \$90 billion that alcohol use costs the health care industry each year.

Of course, the dollar cost of alcohol use is only part of the story. Spousal abuse; the physical abuse and sexual molestation of children; acquaintance rape and family neglect are just some of the conditions often associated with the use of alcohol.

So many young people have lost their lives due to the combinations of alcohol and vehicles, and alcohol and guns. Permanent brain damage and other serious injuries caused by alcohol use have destroyed the quality of life of many of our children and their families.

We can no longer ignore the enormous cost to society of alcohol use. As First Lady, you are in a position to have considerable influence upon how the nation looks upon the use of alcohol. I have seen pictures of the President, family members and guests with wine glasses in their hands. I have read that the President drinks beer and furnishes wine to his passengers on Air Force I. I have also read that there was a "Wine Appreciation Week" reception held at the White House (where smoking is banned, by the way).

Whether consciously or not, you and the President are sending the message to the country that alcohol use is the "thing" to do! The idea that alcohol used in moderation (promoted by companies like Anheuser-Busch) is a safe and desirable thing to do, perpetuates a cruel hoax on society (particularly on our young people).

To encourage people to use a dangerous, mind-altering and addictive drug like alcohol "in moderation" defies all common sense. I see people in restaurants, in bars, at parties, at receptions, on airplanes, etc. drinking beer and wine. I then see them get into their cars to drive home (or elsewhere).

Are these drinking drivers "staggering drunk"? No. Should they be behind the wheel of a car? Emphatically, No! "Moderate" drinkers who drink and drive are a menace on the roads and highways.

Long term alcohol use, even in moderation, can cause and contribute to a host of health problems that put a burden on our health care system. According to a study conducted for the Rand Corporation, taxes on alcohol paid less than half the costs that drinkers impose on the public through vehicle accidents, sick leave and other expenses, (while smokers just about paid their own way in taxes). (News item in The Morning [Tacoma, WA] News Tribune, March 17, 1989).

I was a highschool teacher for many years before becoming an attorney. For a brief time I prosecuted individuals charged with "Driving While Intoxicated" (D.W.I.) violations. For the last almost 14 years I have been involved in the field of labor relations. In all those roles I have seen the devastation that is often caused by alcohol use. Believe me, I have a greater fear of being exposed to "second-hand alcohol" than I have of being exposed to second-hand tobacco smoke!

I hope that you will give thoughtful consideration to the facts that I have enumerated above. Thank You!

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Gig Harbor, Washington 98335-7613
[REDACTED]

c: Ross Perot

UW study cites alcohol-abuse costs

The Associated Press

For every tax dollar Washington state collected from sales of beer, wine and distilled spirits in 1990, \$7 in public and private funds were spent to deal with the problems of alcohol abuse, according to University of Washington researchers.

Substance abuse cost the state's economy at least \$1.8 billion in 1990, researchers at the UW School of Public Health reported.

The study was sponsored by the Alcohol and Substance Abuse unit of the state Department of Social and Health Services. Researchers looked at such direct costs as medical care and treatment and at the cost of wasted resources and reduced productivity.

Although drug users contribute the most to crime rates, alcohol abuse has a much greater economic impact.

Alcohol is the drug of choice for a greater portion of the population, and alcoholics have more health problems, say researchers, who attribute nearly two-thirds of the costs of substance abuse to the abuse of alcohol.

More than twice as many people abuse alcohol as other drugs, according to the study. Sixteen- and 17-year-old males choose alcohol three times more often than drugs, and almost twice as many females in that age group abuse alcohol as abuse drugs, even though researchers say that drugs are used more often by younger people than by adults.

Alcohol abuse also takes a greater toll of lives. Of the 2,155 substance-abuse related deaths in 1990, almost 90 percent were tied to alcohol abuse.

Nearly 400 motor vehicle deaths involved alcohol, and more than 300 people died from liver failure and other alcohol-related diseases. More than 25 percent of suicides and almost 50 percent of homicides involved alcohol.

Other costs associated with drug and alcohol abuse have consequences that will burden families and state and private resources well into the future.

Although fetal alcohol syndrome occurs in just slightly more than one birth in 1,000, according to state records, researchers say

children suffering from the syndrome require extra help ranging from special education to lifelong institutionalization, and are more likely to become alcohol abusers themselves later in life.

Researchers say the link between intravenous drug use and AIDS is well known but that drug and alcohol abuse also weakens the immune system and can contribute to unsafe sex practices that spread the disease.

The cost of caring for AIDS patients was about \$30,000 each per year in 1990, and the annual medical costs for HIV patients was about \$5,000 each.

Although state records do not include information on substance abuse by abusive parents or guardians, researchers say that child abuse and neglect is one of the most serious consequences of drug and alcohol abuse.

Washington Child Protective Services received more than 60,000 reports of child abuse and neglect and more than 14,000 reports of child sex abuse in 1991, according to the report.

GIG HARBOR, WA 98335-7613



Steve Scully
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