

# the RED CUP Q&A



separating alcohol fact from fiction  
EVERY TUESDAY IN THE DAILY WILDCAT

## Q Do you see the drinking age changing to 18 in the near future?

**A.** Love it or loathe it, the minimum legal drinking age (MLDA) of 21 is likely here to stay. Here's why: back in 1984, when President Reagan signed it into law, the incentive to make states comply was by linking it to federal highway funds, since states needed these dollars to maintain their highways and build new ones. By 1988, all 50 states had changed their legal drinking age to 21, even though individual states were given the right to set their own drinking laws following the repeal of Prohibition in 1933 (ironically, the 21st amendment).

Critics of the law contend it doesn't make sense to let 18 year olds vote, enter into contracts, and enlist in the military, but not have a legal beer. Supporters point to the fact that it saves an estimated 900 lives each year in traffic fatalities alone. And despite underage drinking, the law does deter and limit access to booze among teens and young adults – individuals with developing brains that benefit from delayed exposure to alcohol.

No matter what your age or take on the 21 MLDA, here are some good things to keep in mind:

- 1) **Know the Law** – Don't be surprised when the law gets enforced if you drink underage. The more you drink and/or the bigger the party, the greater the odds that you will become familiar with the legal system. Also, Arizona has some of the toughest laws on drinking and driving in the country, so have a sober designated driver or take a cab.
- 2) **Drink Smarter** – If you drink, set a limit on the number of drinks you will have, stay away from shots, eat food, drink plenty of water, and avoid drinking games that can turn a fun night into one you regret. A good rule of thumb: no more than one drink per hour for women or two drinks per hour for men.
- 3) **Be Kind, Step Up** – A new school year brings new social opportunities, and when alcohol is in the mix there are risks. Look out for one another and don't be afraid to help someone in need – you'd want them to do the same for you.



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