

American Academy of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

For Release: February 17, 2009

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Press Statement

on

INTRODUCTION OF HOUSE RESOLUTION 1028, SUPPORT 21 ACT OF 2009

By David T. Tayloe Jr., MD, FAAP, president, American Academy of Pediatrics

“The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), which represents 60,000 pediatricians, applauds Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard for the introduction of the *Support 21 Act of 2009*, a bill that seeks to reinforce public support for the 21 Minimum Legal Drinking Age (MLDA) and provide additional federal tools to help health care providers reduce underage drinking.

“The MLDA law has been remarkably effective in reducing underage drinking and youth alcohol problems and should not be weakened. In addition, a person’s brain has yet to finish developing until at least the early 20s. When adolescents drink alcohol while the brain is still developing, it can lead to long-lasting negative health consequences.

“The Academy is in support of H.R. 1028 because it includes critical provisions that will ensure that this life-saving law is maintained and strengthened:

- Creates an intensive \$22 million annual national media campaign to reinforce support for and the enforcement of the age 21 law, describe the public health benefits of the law, and encourage parental support of preventing underage drinking;
- Recognizes the important role pediatricians and other child health care providers play in reducing underage drinking by providing grants to professional pediatric medical organizations to educate their members on alcohol screening, brief intervention, referral, and treatment;
- Establishes supplemental grants to help community anti-drug coalitions integrate child health care providers into their underage drinking programs;
- Expands underage drinking prevention activities at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC);
- Requires the Institute of Medicine to compile existing research on the effect of alcohol on adolescent brain development and report on the public health implications of the findings.

“The MLDA law has saved countless young people around this country. The data is irrefutable: the 21 Minimum Legal Drinking Age saves lives. The American Academy of Pediatrics is proud to support Representative Roybal-Allard in her efforts to reinforce support for this law. The Academy calls on Congress to pass this legislation as soon as possible.”

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The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults.