Legal Drinking Age Should be lowered to 18 in America

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**Introduction**

The MLDA specifies a particular age when an individual can start purchasing and consuming alcoholic beverages. In the United States, the Current MLDA is 21 years. In the last decade, there have emerged several debates of whether the MDLA should be lowered from the current 21 years to 18 years. Diverse scholars have had different arguments and opinions regarding the discussions, with others supporting it while others are opposing the idea. In general, the argument of lowering the legal drinking is subjected to both negative and positive opinions due to the controversy that is associated with such debates. There have been various concerns that revolve around reducing the MLDA in the US to 18, with much of the concerns being centered on the health of young people. However, the pro side argues that lowering the age would help reduces and mitigate unsupervised drinking and irresponsible drinking that may have adverse effects on the victims. As a result of the controversies, various stakeholders have raised the need to reexamine the laws on the drinking age. Some argue that the limit exposes young people to more threats than benefits. The fundamental and general controversy that surrounds this argument is that lowering the MLDA from 21 to 18 would not sufficiently help address the issues of underage drinking among the young people in the US. While some people are supporting the idea, most are not compelled to alter the law because of the perceived adverse effects. However, although the MLDA laws exist, young people can access alcohol through hidden means. The pro side of the controversy is that 21-age drinking limit has eliminated binge drinking among the youths. Still, those in favor of lowering the age limit argue the teenagers resort to unsupervised drinking (Hansen &7Waddell, 2018). On the other hand, the con side of the controversy is founded on the argument against lowering the MLDA, which argues that the consumption of alcohol causes the perils at a young age. For instance, McCartt et al. (2010), believes that fatal accidents have reduced significantly. The scope of the argument is narrowed down to the American young people who are below 21 years of age. Therefore the MLDA should be lowered to 18 to addressed issues related to alcohol consumption such as binge drink by allowing to drink under supervised environments.

**Literature review**

***General introduction of the Literature Review***

This section provides an in-depth analysis of previous research work of other scholars and researchers on the same topic. Generally, the literature review provides an insightful view of how other researchers have provided their argument on the debate regarding the reduction of the minimum legal drinking age to 18 in the US. The history of the debate as well controversy encompassing it is explored extensively under this section.

***History of MLDA in the US***

Based on the finding of Wechsler & Nelson, (2010), the MLDA have been in existence for 75 years, Choose Responsibility, which is a non-profit organization repealed the MLDA Act of 1984 calling for the government to lower the age to 18 years. The Act of 1984 appealed to all states to maintain the MLDA at 21 years. However, several states have not fully implemented the laws.

***Arguments on the effects of MLDA on young people***

According to McCartt, et al. (2010) the initiation of the age 21 as the minimum drinking age has helped minimize the consumption of alcohol among high school students as well as young adults in adolescence. Based on the findings of this study, it has been noted that the number of fatal accidents associated with the drinking of alcohol among the youths has significantly reduced since the inception of MLDA of 21 in 1998. Furthermore, having raised the minimum drinking age from 18 to 21 have reduced chaos associated with drunk young adults to an enormous extend. However, based on the reports of these studies, there is no affirmation on how education can be linked with the established law to substitute the effects of MLDA-21. There are higher chances that youths who are below 21 years are likely to drink alcohol in secrete place that could extremely jeopardize their health. This, because they are the amounts taken, are not regulated. Nevertheless, the author maintains his position by voting to oppose the argument. He argues that MLDA should not be lowered to from 21 to 18 will elevate the traffic clash among young people.

Additionally, the pro side of this argument is further highlighted and exemplified by Hansen & Waddell (2018). According to these two scholars lowering the minimum legal drinking age to 21 years will help several young people to consume alcohol under safe and controlled environments since there would be appropriate supervision. They argue that a significant percentage of college students are below 21 years, which mean that they take alcohol in unsafe surroundings such as party houses. Since there is no regulation in these environments, they tend to participate in binge drinking. Additionally, those who illegally drink alcohol as a result of being underage, in most cases, fail to seek medical attention when getting injuries. Therefore, Hansen and Waddell reports that lowering the legal drinking age to 18 will significantly reduce the accidents that are characterized by alcohol consumption. However, Carpenter & Dobkin (2011) gives a contrary argument. The duo argues that underage drinking will scale the adverse effects such as increased injuries, deaths, accidents, crime and sexual irresponsibility among young people. They further say that people who are below 20 years are likely to underestimate the future harm that is characterized by their behaviors and actions. Underage drinking may also be associated with the inability to sound decisions regarding the amount of alcohol to consume. Teenagers are also not responsible for the cost of drinking, and they carry such costs to other people or engage in crime to get money for purchasing alcohol.

Since American citizens are allowed to make a democratic decision such as voting and can be prosecuted at the age of 18 implies that they can as well be allowed to make decisions regarding the use of alcohol at that age. Further, the authors argue that setting age 18 as the MLDA will make young people less prone to excessive drinking, which may adversely affect their health. They believe that that current MLDA of 21 makes those who are below 20 years to drink as an act of rebellion to such law. While their arguments are generally focused on ensuring that the youths below 21 years consume alcohol in safe and regulate the environment, the con part of it that they do not consider the adverse impact on the psychological development of the adolescents. Based on the arguments of Silveri, (2012), alcohol consumption is initiated at the adolescent between age 15 and 20 years. Generally, this is the period when the different structure of the brain undergoes development. Cognitive and decision making abilities are associated with brain development and maturation. According to Silveri’s argument, it is affirmed that there are risk factors to the development of the brain that is related to underage drinking, such as increased sensitivity to alcohol disruption in the memory. Consequently, individuals below 20 years are vulnerable to brain effects that are associated with alcohol usage. For this reason, Silveri, (2012), maintain that the MLDA should not be lowered to 18. Limiting the MLDA to will help reduce the brain disruption caused by alcohol consumption among the youths. Inhibiting alcohol consumption in young adults also minimizes adverse behavioral consequences.

References

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