



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 10, 2008

Contact: Brad D. Reynolds

(614) 540-9985

[breynolds@DrugFreeActionAlliance.org](mailto:breynolds@DrugFreeActionAlliance.org)

On The Web: [www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org](http://www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org)

### **Drug-Free Action Alliance Promotes Properly Classifying and Taxing Alcopops**

*Flavored malt beverages are not beer and should not be classified and taxed as such.*

(Columbus, OH) Drug-Free Action Alliance hosted a press conference today to bring attention to alcopops, sweet alcoholic beverages that appeal to children. Alcopops are currently classified by the state of Ohio as beer. Drug-Free Action Alliance is urging the state to reclassify these colorful sweet-tasting alcoholic products as mixed beverages.

At the press conference, held in the Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts, Drug-Free Action Alliance released its position paper, *Properly Classifying and Taxing Alcopops*, to legislators, statewide elected officials, members of the Statewide Prevention Coalition (SPCA) and the Alcohol and Drug Addiction Prevention Association of Ohio (ADAPAO) and the public.

Alcohol is the number one substance abuse problem in America and more young people die from alcohol-related causes than from all other illicit drugs combined; more than 5,000 per year.

Patricia Harmon, Executive Director of Drug-Free Action Alliance opened the press conference by highlighting Drug-Free Action Alliance's position on reclassifying these alcoholic products to reduce underage drinking in Ohio.

"Underage drinking is a serious problem in the state of Ohio with devastating consequences to youth and alcopops are most popular with underage drinkers," said Harmon. "Of 8<sup>th</sup> graders who drink, 77% consume alcopops, compared to only 30% of those aged 25 to 30. Furthermore, alcopops are not beer – they are an alcohol product that contains distilled spirits. Drug-Free Action Alliance urged the state of Ohio to classify alcopops as mixed beverages not as beer, thereby helping to prevent underage drinking in Ohio."

Dr. Ted Miller, a nationally known economist with the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) addressed the cost of underage drinking in the state of Ohio. The cost estimate includes medical care, work loss, and pain and suffering associated with the multiple problems resulting from the use of alcohol by youth.

Red Ribbon Celebration

College Initiative to Reduce  
High Risk Drinking

Ohio Resource Network  
Clearinghouse

Statewide Prevention  
Coalition Association

Parents Who Host, Lose The Most:  
Don't be a party to teenage drinking

Ohio Center for  
Coalition Excellence

Know!

Youth Philanthropy  
Council

[www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org](http://www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org)



(Page 2)

“The cost of underage drinking in Ohio totaled \$2.9 billion in 2008,” said Miller. “Underage consumption of alcopops represents close to a half billion dollars of these costs. Any action Ohio can take to reduce the consumption of alcopops by youth would save both lives and money.”

Jessica Trickett, a senior at The Ohio State University spoke about her substance abuse addiction and recovery. She said that she and her friends began drinking alcopops because of the sweet taste that she and her friends liked.

“Everyone I drank with when I was young drank the same stuff because it tasted good,” Jessica told the audience gathered. “We wanted something that tasted sweet and fruity – like juice or pop.”

Drug-Free Action Alliance is a nonprofit organization that oversees many successful programs that include Know!, *Parents Who Host, Lose The Most: Don't be a party to teenage drinking*, the Ohio College Initiative to Reduce High-Risk Drinking and the Ohio Red Ribbon Celebration.

More information about Drug-Free Action Alliance can be accessed at: [www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org](http://www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org).

###

Red Ribbon Celebration

College Initiative to Reduce  
High Risk Drinking

Ohio Resource Network  
Clearinghouse

Statewide Prevention  
Coalition Association

Parents Who Host, Lose The Most:  
Don't be a party to teenage drinking

Ohio Center for  
Coalition Excellence

Know!

Youth Philanthropy  
Council

[www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org](http://www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org)