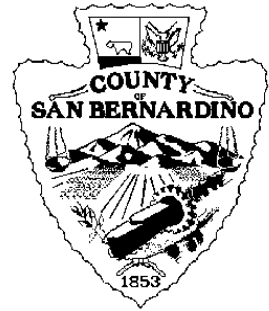


# NEWS

From Supervisor Gary Ovitt  
Fourth District, San Bernardino County



For Immediate Release  
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## Board to Discuss "Social Hosting" Ordinance to Reduce Underage Drinking

The Board of Supervisors on Tuesday will consider an ordinance that will make it a crime for adults to allow minors to consume alcohol in their homes.

Research by the American Medical Association shows that alcohol is the leading cause of death among teenagers. Easy access to alcohol, especially at parties or other social gatherings, is a clear threat to the health and safety of our youth.

Social gatherings such as house parties have been shown to be the primary source for underage drinking, and higher incidences of "binge drinking" occur at such gatherings. The County of San Bernardino may join the list of local governments now cracking down on parents who host parties with alcohol for minors.

Implementing this ordinance will give parents some peace of mind when their children attend a party at a friend's house. It would allow law enforcement to cite parents who allow underage youth to drink on their property or host a party at which underage minors consume alcohol.

"Adults are knowingly renting mountain community vacation properties for unsupervised, underage drinking parties and feigning ignorance when law enforcement responds to calls for service," stated Third District Supervisor Neil Derry, who brought this ordinance before the Board of Supervisors. "This law would hold these irresponsible adults accountable."

"Some adults, believing that young people will be drinking anyway, think that providing them a safe place to do their drinking, even supplying them with alcohol, is the responsible thing to do. But the research does not substantiate this belief," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Gary Ovitt. "In addition to drinking and driving, many other problems have been linked to underage drinking. These include an increased chance of developing a drinking problem later on in life."

Underage and binge drinking among teens and young adults is a significant public health and safety issue throughout San Bernardino County, according to the County Department of Public Health.

Underage drinking is a factor in nearly half of all teen traffic collisions and nearly half of all youth suicides. Some other adverse consequences include injuries and accidents, unplanned or unprotected sex, fights, sexual assault or date rape, and other violence.

“This Social Host Ordinance reduces the steady stream of alcohol for young people at house parties,” Ovitt said. “It’s a tool for the community – not just law enforcement. It will force parents to think twice before they decide to host an underage drinking party.”

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