

Police Talking Points

- In Ventura County, most underage drinking happens at somebody's house. A survey in Ventura County found that 74 percent of young people say that the last time they binge drank (five or more drinks), it happened either at their home or someone else's home.
- Studies also show that high school seniors list parties as the place where they get alcohol 60 percent of the times when they drink.
- Our own police and emergency call statistics also show that assaults and injuries are more prevalent at house parties. Among underage drinkers arrested for DUI in Ventura County, about 76 percent of 18- and 19-year-olds had their last drink in a private home.
- But the county cannot achieve this alone. The county's social host ordinance only covers unincorporated areas. Ventura County is made up of 10 incorporated cities, each of which passes and enforces laws within its boundaries. And these cities are where the bulk of Ventura County's population – including its young people – resides.
- The Social Host Ordinance will hold adults and property owners accountable for the cost of law enforcement's repeated response to out-of-control underage drinking parties causing a disturbance due to noise, crowds or other nuisance complaints. It's not an attempt to stop all parties, just the ones where underage drinking occurs.
- Problems from house parties with underage drinking spread throughout the community. Date rapes, assaults, property damage and drunken driving are fairly common occurrences from unruly underage drinking parties.
- These problems may occur long after the last person leaves the premises. But the intoxication from the house party is still to blame.
- Breaking up house parties and dealing with the consequences of intoxicated or drunk youngsters getting into trouble is a big drain on taxpayer-supported police resources.
- This is aggravating because the whole problem is preventable. The social host ordinance could reduce the police costs, particularly on weekends.
- We applaud the Ventura County board of supervisors and the community for also supporting this ordinance.
- This ordinance will save the lives of young people, reduce injuries and arrests of young people, protect our communities and reduce taxpayers' costs.
- And, it will help us to improve public safety in all of Ventura County because we can focus our resources on other problems.

Elected officials talking points

- Underage and binge drinking among teens and young adults is a significant public health and safety issue throughout Ventura County. And as an elected official I recognize the need to reduce youth access to alcohol.
- Underage drinking is not having a glass of wine at dinner with your parents. Young adults binge drink at almost three times the rate of older adults. Binge drinking is having 4 or 5 drinks in one setting.
- A survey of Ventura County residents found that those who said they drink alcohol, 42 percent of young people report binge drinking in the last 30 days. For those 26 and older, that number drops to only 14 percent. So binge drinking is a big part of the underage drinking culture in this county.
- Also, underage drinking is a factor in nearly half of all teen automobile crashes and nearly two-thirds of youth suicides. Some of the other adverse consequences for teens drinking include injuries and accidents, unplanned or unprotected sex, fights, sexual assault, or date rape, and other violence.
- We need to change the mindset that all teens will drink—it's just a rite of passage.
- The reason is youth who begin drinking alcohol before age 15 are four times more likely to become dependent on alcohol than those who wait to begin drinking until age 21.
- This Social Host Ordinance stops the steady stream of booze for young people at house parties. It's a tool for the community – not just law enforcement.
- Under this Social Host Ordinance, people hosting unruly underage drinking parties will be fined \$1,000 if law enforcement is called to break it up. And if they are called again to the same property with the same host within a year, the host can be forced to pay for the cost of police services. With that in mind, no one should be hosting underage drinking parties.
- We can't arrest away this problem—parents and adults need to be part of the solution. This Social Host Ordinance will force parents to think twice before they decide to host an underage drinking party.
- In fact, any time a young person has alcohol, an adult sold it, gave it or provided a place to drink it. These adults are part of the problem, but we can be part of the solution by holding these individuals accountable for underage drinking.
- Ventura County has 10 cities that all face the same issues of underage drinking. Two of them already enacted similar ordinances—Ojai and Fillmore.
- Now we invite all the cities of Ventura County to join in the effort to shut off the main source of alcohol to minors.
- The protection of our young people will be ineffective if we crack down on such parties on one side of an invisible county-city line, but not on the other. Kids are smart; the parties will simply move.

Community Talking Points

- This ordinance is important to protecting the lives and safety of our kids, to protecting our own lives and safety from intoxicated kids, and to protecting our property and the peace of our community.
- Let's be clear: We are not against kids having fun. We are not against parties. We ARE against parties that allow underage drinking. And when alcohol is mixed with underage kids, you've got problems.
- As a parent, I know how hard it is to teach kids to be "responsible" and make the right choices. This Social Host Ordinance is a way to limit their access to alcohol by preventing parents and other adults from hosting underage drinking parties. We're helping them make smart choices by not providing alcohol or a place to drink it.
- Research shows that young people don't even need to drink heavily to have negative consequences from alcohol. The dangers of youth drinking are substantially greater than the dangers of adult drinking.
- Young people who drinking are more likely to engage in risk-taking behavior that can result in injury, violence, crime and death.
- And, they can cause substantial problems for our community, which is why this Social Host Ordinance is the community's way of preventing underage drinking.
- As neighbors, we need to rely on each other to make our communities safe for all of us. Out-of-control parties take away that safety for all of us.
- Neighbors face problems of noise disruption, property damage, vandalism and reduction in our quality of life when out of control parties take place in our community.
- Neighborhoods who are not in the direct vicinity of the party are affected, too.
- A young person who gets drunk at a house party and then gets behind the wheel is a danger to everybody, even those who live far from the party.
- Also, house parties can drain a community of needed police enforcement in other areas.
- We are also concerned by what we see happening to kids leaving these parties. Fights, assaults and students getting into a car drunk are just some examples of the things we see kids doing to themselves.
- We want our kids to have fun. But, like any parents, we have to protect them from doing things that are dangerous. House parties are dangerous. Let's face it, young people are going to take risks, but we can stop providing a place for them to drink where the risks are so much more dangerous.
- We would like to thank the board of supervisors for passing this Social Host Ordinance that will protect Ventura County kids and communities, and reduce the costs and demands on law enforcement.

- We know that with the help of the supervisors we can make this invaluable policy work to protect our community.

Youth Talking Points

- As young people who live in Ventura County, we know about the problems that are caused by house parties.
- The research shows that nearly twice as many young people binge drink at other people's homes than at their own homes.
- That's what house parties are – places where young people can go to drink. House parties are held in places where parents and other responsible adults aren't.
- Or, they're held in places where parents either don't care if you drink, or they're looking the other way.
- Kids don't drink like many adults, just to be social. Kids drink for effect. They drink to get drunk. Or, they drink because of peer pressure.
- Either way, the results can get ugly. When kids get drunk, they do stupid things, including like getting in fights or getting sick or having sex.
- And how do you get to and from house parties? You drive or ride with someone who might have been drinking, too.
- Most young people who get arrested for drunken driving had their last drink at somebody's house, student surveys support this claim.
- While most kids don't go to house parties and get drunk, we all know where the house parties are happening.
- We all know about people who get drunk at house parties and get into trouble, whether it's drinking and driving, getting in a fight, getting injured or having sex when they didn't really want to have sex.
- If this ordinance can cut down on the number of house parties where kids get drunk, then it would definitely be a good thing.
- That means there would be fewer kids drinking and driving, fewer kids getting into fights, fewer kids having sex when they didn't really want to have sex.
- It would mean fewer kids getting hurt and fewer kids dying.
- One thing it wouldn't mean is fewer kids having fun.
- Kids are going to have fun no matter what. They'll just find ways that aren't so dangerous.
- What's so fun anyway about throwing up on yourself, crashing a car or getting in a fight, anyway?