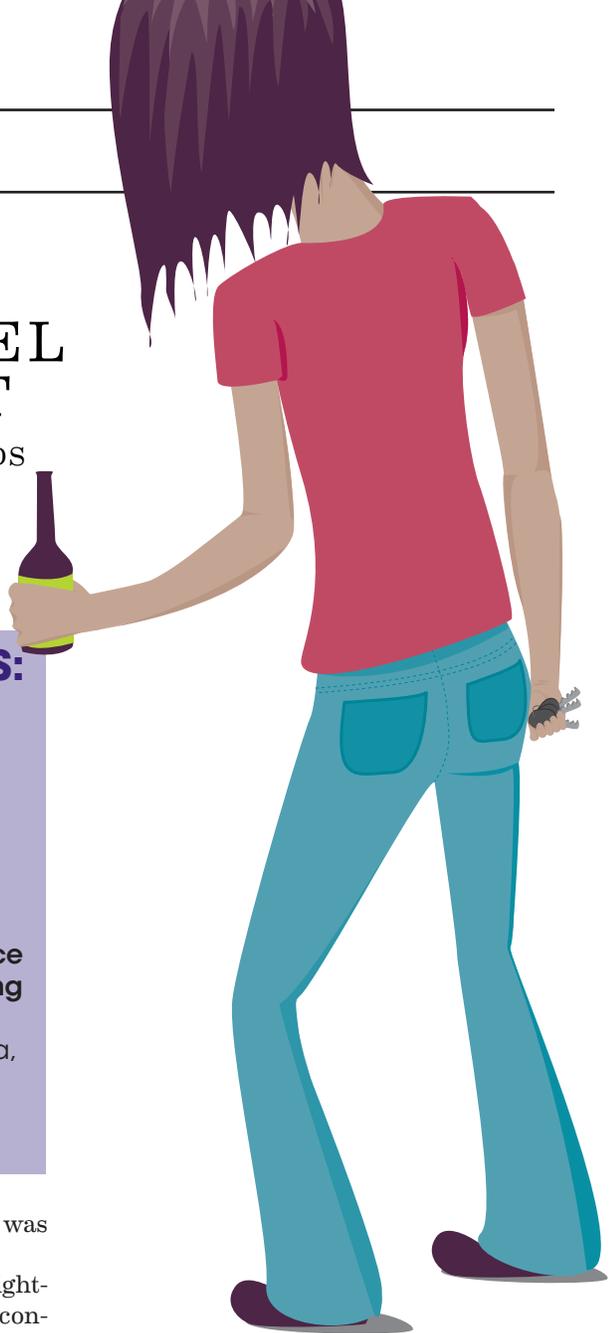


# Thank you, MADD, for the 21-years-old age limit on alcohol based on extortion



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I was sitting at my computer, browsing PostSecret, a website where people can anonymously send in secrets, when I came across a postcard with a photo of a young girl torn out of a magazine. I thought of my friend Nina as I read the words. Nina, who, weekend after weekend, would drink to the point where when it came to be morning, she would not be able to remember whether she lost her virginity in a blacked out haze. I imagined Nina sitting at her desk, the permanent marker smelling of nausea and headaches because this is a Monday morning, and the glue stick and torn pages of the magazine are off to one side, crumpled like day-old beer cans, and she isn't sure how to word what she has to say.

She eventually decides on this: "Am I an alcoholic or am I a normal college binge drinker?"

The answer: Just because you're in college doesn't change what alcohol does to your body. The idea of a "normal" binge drinker is any oxymoron. Excessive use of alcohol, or binge drinking, is a sign that you are either an alcoholic or that you might become one.

Many young adults don't know what makes them drunk or they don't believe they are or simply want to prove they can hold their liquor better as a point of pride.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), originally Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (an important distinction), was founded in 1980 by a mother whose daughter was killed by a man who had been drinking and driving. That mother, Candy Lightner, wanted to raise awareness of the leniency of laws for repeat offenders for driving while intoxicated. Lightner didn't want another prohibition, and

## STATE DIFFERENCES:

### Ban alcoholic consumption altogether:

Alabama, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania.

### Consumption allowed in specific locations, in presence of consenting and supervising family members:

California, Colorado, Montana, New York, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

she wasn't against drinking—she was against drinking and driving.

The man who hit and killed Lightner's daughter had a blood alcohol content (BAC) of 0.20, which has nothing to do with his age. The same BAC will affect anyone, aside from individual variances in tolerance, the same way, whether they are over or under the arbitrary age of 18, the arbitrary age of 21, the arbitrary age of never-old-enough.

The interstate highway system is owned and operated by the federal government – the same federal government that decides how much money each state gets to repair its highways. Now, one might wonder what this has to do with MADD and with the National Minimum Drinking Age Act (NMDAA), and one is right to question that.

This is how they are connected: There was a law in the works in Congress in 1984, the NMDAA. This law required states to raise the age for drinking and public possession of alcohol to 21. If the states did not comply,

their interstate highway system funding would be cut by 10 percent under the Federal Highway Aid Act. When this act was signed into law, many states were in violation of their own state constitutions, all to protect their livelihood. This kind of threatening is considered by many to be extortion.

MADD recently claimed that this legislation reduces the number of alcohol-related accidents by 800 each year, but what MADD doesn't say is that according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in order for an accident to be considered "alcohol-related," a driver, motorcycle operator or non-occupant (pedestrian) must have a BAC of 0.01 or higher#, which, according to Kurt M. Dubowski, PhD, is a BAC level that results in no impairment and can only be detected using special tests.