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**Mothers Against Drunk Driving**  
**Support HB 418 (Social Host law improvement)**  
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Chairman LaRe and Members of the House Criminal Justice Committee. Underage drinking is a big deal - bigger than you might think. The law says it's illegal to drink under the age of 21, and that it is illegal to host an underage drinking party. Mothers Against Drunk Driving believes underage drinking is not just a youth problem. It is also very much an adult problem. Adults continue to allow those under the legal drinking age to drink—illegally. Please support HB 418 that will improve the Social Host law in Ohio.

This legislation is important to help enforce the 21-drinking age law and ensure that individuals who provide alcohol to those under 21 are accountable for their action. Studies have shown that when parents provide alcohol or allow an underage drinking party, they are doing more harm than good. Not only does it increase negative risks, but it also creates a perception of direct approval for drinking. According to research, this perception is then carried over to times when the parent is not around. Adolescents who attend parties where parents permit alcohol are at increased risk for heavy episodic drinking, alcohol-related problems, and driving impaired. Social Host Liability laws hold individuals who knowingly provide or allow the use of alcohol by those under 21, liable.

There is a gap in the current Social Host law in Ohio. In many cases, especially when there may be a party-type atmosphere that is comprised of underage drinkers, it becomes obvious to any casual observer that the adult host was certainly aware of what was occurring. To deny that there was any knowledge of what was occurring, in many situations, denies common sense.

Research shows that young people who drink are a danger to themselves, their friends, and others. For more than 20 years, hundreds of high-quality clinical studies in the United States and Europe have shown that the earlier in life young people drink, the more frequent and severe the problems they face in the short and long term.

Science shows that a child's brain works differently from an adult's brain. The brain of an adolescent is still in a critical period of development well into their 20's. Alcohol interferes with both how brains and bodies grow.

The Social Host legislation proposed in HB 418 will help crack down on teen parties which are a primary venue for underage drinking for high school and college students – and of high consumption of alcohol and binge drinking.

The 21-drinking age has saved thousands of lives. It can only be effective if laws help ensure that those who irresponsibly provide alcohol to those under the legal drinking age are held responsible. HB 418 reinforces the 21-drinking age law and will help protect Ohio youth.

MADD urges you to please advance HB 418.

Thank you.