Alcohol Responsibility

Should the drinking age be lowered to 18? Psychology Today is a website which has articles on different topics. I have chosen an article called “The Pros and Cons of Drinking at 18” written by Dale Archer, M.D. which was published on July 13, 2012. It was published in Reading Between the (Head)Lines. It had a lot of great information and sources included with it. It gave a good amount of statistics and realistic comparisons. Of course this kind of topic raises tons of controversy such as, whether or not it’s where it is because of past experiences. Some people wonder if teenagers would be able to manage that responsibility at such a young age. I feel like some teenagers would abuse it and some will think smart and handle it responsibly like a “real” adult would.

The 18th amendment prohibited alcohol from the public. It was a criminal act to produce, transport, have or consume alcohol. A woman by the name of Pauline Sabin was a female Republican prohibition repeal leader who hated the hypocrisy displayed by the federal government, when it came to alcohol consumption. So later on because of Sabin prohibition got repealed in 1933. This was the only time in U.S history that an amendment repealed a previous amendment. Would teenagers act smart and safe if the drinking age got lowered? According to Choose Responsibly, “twice as many 21-year-olds died in alcohol-related auto accidents as 18 year-olds. A policy that claims to be saving thousands each year may simply be re-distributing deaths over the life cycle to the point at which it becomes legal to drink alcohol — age 21.” So it that’s proof that it is not such a bad idea to lower the age. David J. Hanson, Ph.D. stated in his report, The Legal Drinking Age: Science vs. Ideology, that even though less teens are drinking,
when they do drink they actually drink more. So there is where the responsibility factor kicks in on whether or not teens are able to think before they act. Naturally they will abuse that freedom because they simply do not know any better. Teenagers like to experiment a lot especially when they know there’s a risk involved. I don’t know why but we do.

To be honest lowering the drinking age probably would only have a minuscule effect on the amount of deaths occurred. Since some older adults are just as careless as the young adults (18-20 years old), it truly doesn’t matter how old you are its how mature you are. Archer actually brought up the argument, “that school systems should incorporate a ‘responsible drinking course comparable to sex education. It would focus on all the negative effects of irresponsible drinking besides drunk driving. Things like binge drinking and brain damage that could hurt you.” He also said there should be an ‘alcohol license’, similar to a driver’s license. You have to pass a test dealing with alcohol facts when you are 18 in order to drink. If arrested for anything alcohol related you lose that right until you turn 21. I thought both of those ideas were very brilliant. I feel that if that were to go in affect it would lower the deaths from alcohol tremendously. If you get caught drinking and driving for instance, you can be saved from doing it again and resulting in a fatality.

According to the article, “Should the Drinking Age Be Lowered from 21 to a Younger Age, some of the pros of lowering the drinking age are: 18 is the age of adulthood in the U.S, and adults should have the right to make their own decisions pertaining to alcohol. Turning 18 entitles citizens to the rights of voting, smoke cigarettes, serve on juries, get married, sign contracts, and join the military. Another is allowing 18-20 year olds to drink alcohol in regulated environments with supervision would decrease unsafe drinking activity. Prohibiting young age group from drinking in bars, restaurants, and other licensed locations causes them to drink in unsupervised places such as frat houses. The decrease in
drunken driving fatalities as a percentage of total traffic fatalities in the United States does not correlate to the Minimum Level Drinking Age (MLDA). Since 1982, a decline of drunken driving fatalities occurred across all age groups and demographic categories. Some of the cons of lowering the drinking age are: Lowering MLDA 21 would give high schoolers and even middle schoolers easier access to alcohol. Newly-legal drinkers often purchase alcohol for their underage peers, creating a “trickle-down” effect. Lowering the drinking age will invite more use of illicit drugs among 18-21 year olds. A peer-reviewed study from the *Journal of Studies of Alcohol and Drugs* found that the younger a person begins to drink alcohol the more likely it is that they will use other illicit drugs.

In all I feel that the drinking age should be lowered in some circumstances. Like Archer mentioned in his article 18 year olds should have to take a test much like a driving test to be able to consume alcohol. Even though doing so could seem like a bad idea it really doesn’t matter what age you are, because some 16 year olds are more mature than some 25 year olds. It all depends on how mature and responsible you are when you choose to make these kinds of decisions. These are the questions I need to look into better: Would the world be more chaotic if more people were getting drunk legally? If the drinking age got lowered would that put alcohol in the hands of 15 year olds? What is being done to reduce underage drinking and related problems? These are all frequently asked questions about youth drinking and their understandable, because you can’t trust that every teenager will be responsible with that kind of freedom. If you look at college you will see that almost everybody on a college campus will consume alcohol just once at one point. We will never know how that would turn out because passing that law would probably never happen, but who knows it could save lives.

http://drinkingage.procon.org/