SPEECH #3 – PERSUASIVE SPEECH

Name: DANIEL C. DILIGENT

Title: Lowering the Legal Drinking Age

Specific Purpose: To argue in favor of lowering the minimum legal drinking age in the United States.

Thesis Statement: I will discuss 1) the current legal drinking age, 2) the effect that this drinking age has upon American social norms, and 3) the potential benefits of a lower drinking age.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Hook: Alcohol is ever-present in today’s American society. Television viewers are constantly bombarded with advertisements promoting its consumption. Social events rarely take place without their attendees drinking some alcoholic beverage or another. However, young people in America are told by society that they are not allowed to participate in the common social activity of drinking until they reach the age of 21. Thus, when they find ways around this stipulation – and most of them do – young men and women often engage in irresponsible drinking. Ultimately, the most effective way to cure this social imperfection is to lower the minimum legal drinking age and to begin educating young men and women about responsible alcohol use sooner.

B. Rapport: Most of you are either at or near the current legal drinking age of 21. Undoubtedly, each of you has been affected by the minimum drinking age in one way or another. Whether you have been turned away from a bar or compelled to partake in clandestine drinking practices, you have all been impacted by this age restriction.

C. Credibility: Good evening, my name is Danny Modafferi. I too have felt the impact of the age restriction on alcohol consumption. For example, I have been confined in my ability to cultivate my love for craft beers. I have researched the laws of California extensively in search of a way around these rules, but I have been unsuccessful. As I am now nearing my twenty-first birthday, I am turning my focus to advocating for the reduction of the drinking age for the sake of future generations.

D. Bridge: This evening, I will discuss 1) the current legal drinking age, 2) the effect that this drinking age has upon American social norms, and 3) the potential benefits of a lower drinking age.
II. BODY

A. Current U.S. Drinking Age

1. Under control of the states
   i. All powers not explicitly delegated to the federal government automatically go to the states

   i. Method for the federal government to control the states
   ii. Primarily supported by MADD
      (Tway, Kelley. “The Benefits of the Drinking Age”)

3. Recent attempts to lower the drinking age
   i. Seven states have filed bills to lower the age from 21 to 18
   ii. Choose Responsibility
       (Seaman, Barrett. Binge)
       (Logical Appeal)

Transition statement: Now that you understand the current U.S. drinking age and how it came to be what it is, I will explain the effect that it has had upon American social norms.

B. Drinking Age’s Effect upon American Social Norms

1. Alcohol as a forbidden fruit
   i. Drinking takes place in clandestine settings
   ii. Teens are not taught alcohol responsibility
      (Kiesbye, Stefan. Should the Drinking Age Be Lowered?)
      (Emotional Appeal)

2. High rates of alcohol abuse and addiction
   i. Binge drinking is increasingly prevalent
   ii. Youths continue to drink more than ever before
      (Wechsler, Henry. Dying to Drink)
      (Emotional Appeal)
   iii. Exorbitant rate of alcoholism in the U.S.
      (Helzer, John E. Alcoholism in North America, Europe, and Asia)
      (Logical Appeal)

Transition Statement: Since the current policy in the U.S. has been ineffective at creating more responsible drinkers, it is obvious that a modification is needed. I will now elaborate upon the potential benefits of a lower drinking age.
C. Potential Benefits of a Lower Drinking Age

1. Social attitudes toward alcohol consumption would shift
2. Young people will learn to use alcohol responsibly
   i. Choosing Responsibility’s proposal
      (Vines, Joe. “Push to lower drinking age faces tough climb up Capitol Hill”)
      (Emotional Appeal)
3. Leads to less alcohol abuse and addiction
   (Manzardo, Ann. Alcoholism: The Facts)
   (Logical Appeal)
   i. Alcohol would no longer be perceived as a forbidden fruit

III. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the current law setting the minimum drinking age at 21 has failed in its effort to keep America’s young people safe from the dangerous aspects of alcohol consumption. In addition to being ineffective, the law impinges upon the rights of individuals to partake in activities which are otherwise pervasive in today’s American social culture. Though those who are 18 years old are considered adults in nearly all facets of the law, including voting rights and the ability to join the military, they are still treated as minors when it comes to drinking. If an 18-year-old is old enough to make those important decisions, then he or she is certainly old enough to decide whether or not he or she is ready to consume alcohol.

Because of the current laws, young men and women are compelled to furtively experiment with alcohol. Rather than beginning their drinking experiences under the supervision of responsible adults, the young people do so in secret, because the laws and the culture they have created refuse to allow them to explore their natural curiosities. By lowering the drinking age, the U.S. can begin to raise more responsible drinkers, who will not be as prone to alcohol abuse or addiction as today’s Americans are.

Thank you.
IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY


**Appeals in Order**

**Logical Appeal** – “The current legal drinking age of 21 is not working and instead has resulted in the unintended consequence of creating a clandestine college culture of binge drinking that is often conducted off campus, where the school is powerless to control it.”

Seaman, Barrett. *Binge*.

**Emotional Appeal** – “Our country’s young men and women are thrust into independence, particularly in the college setting, without the knowledge necessary to keep themselves healthy and safe.”

Kiesbye, Stefan. *Should the Drinking Age Be Lowered?*

**Emotional Appeal** – “90 percent of the alcohol consumed by those under 21 in the United States is during binge drinking. And binge drinking is most prevalent among people ages 18 to 20. Thus, those who typically partake in the most dangerous drinking practices most often are those who do so secretly.”

Weschsler, Henry. *Dying to Drink*.

**Logical Appeal** – “According to the most recent national household survey, approximately 7.5 percent of the U.S. population abuse and/or are dependent on alcohol.”

Helzer, John E. *Alcoholism in North America, Europe, and Asia*.

**Emotional Appeal** – “The organization Choose Responsibility advocates a national licensing program in which high school graduates obtain a license that entitles them to all the privileges and responsibilities of adult alcohol purchase, possession, and consumption. However, if a license-holder violates the law in any way, then the license is revoked.”

Vines, Joe. “Push to lower drinking age faces tough climb up Capitol Hill”.

**Logical Appeal** – “Alcoholics tend to be physically ill, mentally depressed, and generally unproductive. A program which educates the public about proper, responsible alcohol use would improve the nation’s well-being as a whole by first improving the lives of its individual citizens.”

