



Lakeland Ledger

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Sen. Dockery Should Reconsider Bill On Wine Shipment

An open letter to state Sen. Paula Dockery [R-Lakeland]:

First, let me say that you represent my district. That being said, I was shocked to learn that you filed a bill recently that would allow wine shipments from out of the state directly to Florida consumers.

Obviously, you have never had a teenager to worry about. I have three children, two of whom are teenagers. I wholeheartedly support any legislation that prevents teenagers and other underage young adults from more easily obtaining alcohol.

Many underage adults and teens are already adept at circumventing the system. The system was put in place to prevent them from obtaining alcohol. It was also meant to protect the public at large from underage drunken drivers.

The "publicity stunt" referred to in The Ledger's article was no stunt ["Bush Supports Ending Ban on Wine Shipments," Feb. 2, front page]. The underage student did not have to show ID to receive the alcohol [The Florida Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking had bottles of wine and liquor shipped to a 20-year-old student of Florida State University].

I am a registered nurse who has over the past almost 20 years witnessed first hand the devastating effects of the mixture of alcohol, teens and driving. I have cared for people of all ages left maimed and paralyzed, all because of the senseless act of a drunken person getting behind the wheel of a car. I ask you, why make it easier for these young people to acquire alcohol? The 1997 law you oppose was created for a reason.

You were quoted as saying: "This is America. We're about freedom and choice." You are absolutely right. That is what I teach my kids, only I add one thing: With rights, come responsibility.

So, while you may savor the idea of being able to have your favorite Chardonnay shipped straight to your door from Napa Valley, keep in mind that, by pushing your legislation, you just may be opening the door for an underage drinker to create new victims.

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