

Opinion

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Florida law protects kids from alcohol abuse

Children and alcohol do not mix. That's why Florida law prevents underage persons from purchasing alcohol.

Unfortunately, the lure of easy profit has driven Internet sellers of beer, wine and spirits to wage a battle to weaken these safeguards and allow unregulated and anonymous sales across state lines, opening a new way for minors to obtain alcohol.

The latest clash is now being fought in the U.S. Supreme Court, where Internet alcohol sellers are attacking the constitutional foundation of Florida's laws restricting alcohol sales to minors.

At the heart of the debate in the Supreme Court is an attack on the 21st Amendment, which explicitly gives states the power to regulate the transportation or importation of "intoxicating liquors." In Florida, it is a felony to import alcohol directly into the state in violation of state law.

If we take away that power to regulate alcohol sales, there will be no practical way to stop underage persons from clicking on an Internet site and having beer, wine or liquor delivered directly to them.

The Florida Police Chiefs Association is strongly opposed to allowing beer, wine or liquor to be sold directly over the Internet or through the mail by out-of-state businesses that bypass our state's legal safeguards.

Kids do not need another way to buy alcohol. The system works, and it is worth preserving.

JAY ROMINE

President

Florida Police Chiefs Association

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