
The Balance Of Licensing In The USA

Post-prohibition, the matter of alcohol regulation in our country has primarily been left to the states. The national drinking age is of course a federalized standard, excise taxes exist, and seventeen of the fifty states do prohibit any of their localities from going dry. In practically all other concerns save those listed it is the duty of individual communities to decide just how to go about policing the sale and commercial production of booze. Every conscientious policy maker wants to do what's best for those they represent, but alcohol regulation is often an issue that raises emotional and moral concerns for citizens. Regardless of what one may think about it, drinking is currently a staple of every-day American culture.

Additionally, unlike with smoking where any potential benefits are outweighed by the risks, intoxicating beverages provide a host of health benefits when consumed in moderation. While at the same time, alcohol related illnesses linked to excess consumption are the third leading cause of preventable death in the United States alone. This both helpful and potentially harmful nature of the substance make its careful and responsible regulation by no means an easy matter. Statistical data, duty to community, and the sacredness of personal liberty must all be considered during the creation of pertinent laws. No single and unchanging policy is ideal in every county. Too much regulation can cause just as much if not more unrest than too little, and the markers for when a policy is excessive or insufficient changes with the times and local perceptions, making the proper legislative approach a balanced and ever-shifting one by nature.

Policy makers have been wrestling with ways to balance the freedom to drink — and to profit from those who do — with the public good since the dawn of civilization itself. Americans have been doing it for the past four-hundred years give or take. Sometimes we've written laws that have fit the times perfectly, other times we haven't. However, a few concepts have tended to show themselves throughout our nation's history.

There has never been a time in American history where alcohol was not consumed, regardless of any laws that have been present through the years. In colonial times, drinking was normal, with beer and cider being commonly consumed among adults and children — although it was generally watered down for minors. For many years, partaking in water rather than alcohol might have had you perceived as being of a lower class. Beer was seen as the healthy choice of a well-off individual. Water was disdained for a myriad of reasons. Some touted it as dangerous to consume during hot seasons due to the imbalance of its temperature in relation to that of one's stomach. More mundanely, many manual laborers preferred spirits as it dulled their work aches.

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