

21 Social Hosting Impacts

2009

Quantitative and qualitative data surround the implementation and evaluation of Social Hosting Ordinances throughout the United States.

A look at the effects
of social hosting
ordinances



grand futures
prevention coalition

1. Results of similar policies in other California counties like San Diego and Ventura show that Social Host Ordinances do work. In Rohnert Park, for example, there was a 12.5 percent reduction in house party calls for service within just a year of implementation.¹
2. Edmond police spokeswoman Glynda Chu said police made 71 social-host arrests in the ordinance's first year and the number has dropped since then, "which is a clear indication to us that it is working."²
3. In Ojai, in particular, the city's Chief of Police (and his deputies) report that following the adoption of the SHO in Ojai in January 2006, the number of service calls for party disturbance where underage youth are drinking have decreased.³
4. In addition, Ojai reports a decrease in MIP violations since December 2006.⁴
5. Captain Pentis of the Ventura County Sheriff's Department believes that the adoption of SHO county-wide has led to reductions in incidents of other alcohol-related, violent crimes, including sexual assaults.⁵
6. Receiving special note in Dunn's report was the effectiveness of the city's so-called Social Host Ordinance.

That three-year-old ordinance carries a fine of \$1,000 for anyone who allows underage drinking at a residence. So far, 11 city residents and 25 residents of the rest of the valley have been fined, the police chief said.

But, in 2008, just one city resident was cited for hosting a party at which underage children were served alcohol, while eight residents in unincorporated areas were cited last year.

Deputies and state investigators also cited seven local businesses for selling alcohol to minors.

¹ See http://www.dailycal.org:8080/article/23030/two_sides_of_city_s_alcohol_policy_bill

² See <http://newsok.com/social-host-laws-making-an-impact/article/3342283>

³ Donovan, et al, Figure 1 "Age of Persons Cited for SHO Violations," page 9.

⁴ Donovan, et al, page 15.

⁵ Captain Randy Pentis, Ventura County Sheriff Department, and former Fillmore Chief of Police, can be contacted by City Council members at (805) 494-8248 or randy.pentis@ventura.org.

“It is my opinion that the Social Host Ordinance and alcohol sales operations have been and will continue to be successful in combating underage drinking,” Dunn reported to the council.⁶

7. Research also states that social host liability laws are among the most effective forms of public policy to reduce binge drinking and driving, thereby saving taxpayers money from repeated disturbance calls to police, reduced emergency medical responses to underage drinking parties, reduced injuries and violence, and increased peace within our neighborhoods and protection to private property.⁷
8. Supplementary studies further attribute social host liability laws with decreased alcohol-related traffic fatalities among adults, as well as decreases in self-reported heavy drinking and drinking and driving.⁸
9. To curtail underage drinking, the Social Host Responsibility and Liability Ordinance was passed by the Ventura County Board of Supervisors in April 2006.

Camarillo began enforcing the ordinance in July 2006. Since August of last year, every city in the county has utilized the ordinance to discourage parties that may involve teenagers and alcohol.⁹

10. Thus far, more than fifteen civil citations have been issued and paid in Ventura County for a 100% success rate¹⁰
11. Carver County Attorney Jim Keeler “The fact that in the city of Chaska this ordinance violation is on the books, and there has been an increase in public awareness of the problem, I think helps law enforcement and prosecutors in combating teenage drinking,” Keeler said. “People know

⁶ “Ojai Crime Drops 28 Percent at Ojai Valley News Blog,”

⁷ See “Fact Sheet: San Diego Survey on Social Host Laws,” Institute for Public Strategies, August 2003, www.publicstrategies.org, citing Stout, Sloan, Liang & Davis, 2000, Journal of Studies on Alcohol; Dan Hicks, “Youth Drinking Laws Save Lives, and Money: Holding party hosts responsible makes parties—and communities—safer,” www.venturacountylimits.org.

⁸ Joel Grube, “Alcohol Regulation and Traffic Safety: An Overview,” November 2007, Transportation Research Circular, Number E- C123, Traffic Safety and Alcohol Regulation, A Symposium, June 5-6, 2006, Irvine, California, Transportation Research Board of the National Academies, www.TRB.org;

⁹ See http://www.thecamarilloacorn.com/news/2008-06-06/front_page/002.html

¹⁰ See ci.manhattan-beach.ca.us/.../Ag-Min20061108/20061108-23.pdf

they can be held liable for knowingly providing a place where juveniles can consume alcohol illegally.”¹¹

12. Carver County- Of the adults charged, only three were charged solely with violating a social host ordinance. Typically, they also faced charges of providing alcohol to a minor, or other alcohol/drug-related charges. (See adjoining chart.)¹²

13. Joel Rae on Steamboat Springs Social Hosting Ordinance- said that at a party Sept. 16, officers issued nine citations for minor in possession of alcohol. After an investigation, a person was charged with procurement of alcohol for underage persons, the Class 2 misdemeanor. “If we had not been able to establish probable cause for who was providing alcohol for the kids, and we were at a dead end in that investigation,” the police would have used the social host ordinance, he said.¹³

14. Petaluma Police Department who adopted a Social Hosting Ordinance in 2006

Arrests for furnishing alcohol to minors have dropped from 29 in 2006 to 20 in 2007 to 14 in 2008

Arrests made of minors in possession of alcohol dropped only slightly during the previous three years — from 91 in 2006 to 88 in 2007 to 86 in 2008 — but only 32 arrests have been made this year.¹⁴

15. Lt. Mike Cook of the Petaluma Police Department feels that the ordinance has been effective in addressing underage drinking.

“Absolutely. It gives officers a new tool to address problems, and has been a very good deterrent,” he said. “The teen population is very well aware of this ordinance, based on some of the statements that teens have made to us.”¹⁵

¹¹ Carver County Attorney Jim Keeler <http://mobile.chaska Herald.com/news/police/last-call-many-underage-parties-cities-adopting-social-host-ordinance-rapid-speed-5695>

¹² Carver County Attorney Jim Keeler <http://mobile.chaska Herald.com/news/police/last-call-many-underage-parties-cities-adopting-social-host-ordinance-rapid-speed-5695>

¹³ http://www.steamboatpilot.com/news/2009/oct/04/police_have_not_cited_anyone_alcohol_offense/

¹⁴ See <http://www.petaluma360.com/article/20090618/COMMUNITY/906179930/1362?Title=Curbing-teen-drinking-a-challenge>

¹⁵ See <http://www.petaluma360.com/article/20090618/COMMUNITY/906179930/1362?Title=Curbing-teen-drinking-a-challenge>

16. Social host liability laws have research evidence showing they are effective. In one analysis of all 50 states, social host laws were associated with reductions in heavy drinking as well as drinking and driving¹⁶
17. CHKS (California Healthy Kids Survey) data for Thousand Oaks students demonstrated decreases in ease of obtaining alcohol since the implementation of the ordinance - 59% of 9th graders and 78% of 11 graders reported that alcohol is fairly or very easy to obtain in Fall 2007, as compared to 65% and 84% of 9th and 11th graders before the ordinance was passed.¹⁷
18. Number of Alcohol-Related Emergency Room Visits for Residents of Camarillo 6 prior to implementation of SHO. (SHO was adopted in 2006) That number dropped to 5 in 2006 and 2007. That number dropped in 2008 to 3 and fell again in 2009 to 2.¹⁸
19. The Camarillo survey respondents were asked their opinions regarding the effectiveness of the SHO as a tool for reducing underage drinking parties. Most of the respondents (80%) agreed that the ordinance is an effective tool; only 20% said they believe it is not effective.¹⁹
20. Ventura Unified Students Who Reported Ever Having Driven a Car after Drinking, or Been in a Car Driven by Someone Who Had Been Drinking in 2006 the year of the SHO adoption 29% of ninth graders and 38% of eleventh graders those areas saw 4% decrease by 2008.²⁰
21. The Camarillo survey respondents when asked if there have been any negative impacts in their jurisdiction as a result of the SHO, 100% of those who responded to this item said “no” or that they did not know of any. One respondent added, “I believe the community supports the Social Host Ordinance and wants law enforcement to enforce it.”²¹

¹⁶ See Whetten-Goldstein, K., Sloan, F., Stout, E., & Liang, L. (2000). Civil liability, criminal law, and other policies and alcohol-related motor vehicle fatalities in the United States:

¹⁷ See VCBH SHO Impact Evaluation Report Executive Summary page V

¹⁸ See VCBH SHO Impact Evaluation Report SECTION 3: FINDINGS – IMPACT DATA INDICATORS Page 18

¹⁹ See VCBH SHO Impact Evaluation Report SECTION 3: FINDINGS – PATROL SURVEY Page 22

²⁰ See VCBH SHO Impact Evaluation Report SECTION 3: FINDINGS – IMPACT DATA INDICATORS Page 16

²¹ See VCBH SHO Impact Evaluation Report SECTION 3: FINDINGS – PATROL SURVEY Page 22