

Cross-Border Drinking Concerns

The San Diego-Tijuana Border Project • June, 2002

Residents of San Diego County are very concerned about underage youth traveling to Tijuana, Mexico, to drink alcohol. They believe that marketing by Tijuana bars plays a large role in influencing this phenomenon, according to a comprehensive telephone survey commissioned by the nonprofit Institute for Public Strategies, and they want policymakers to do more to curb the problem.

Methodology

The random poll of 750 county residents 18 years of age and older was conducted by the Washington, D.C.-based firm of Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates between December 1 and 9, 2001. The results are representative by ethnicity, age, gender, income and geography. Residents had the option to conduct the survey in English or Spanish. The survey sample's margin of error is +/- 3.5%.

CONCERN ABOUT THE PROBLEM

- 84% of residents say underage drinking in Mexico by youth who live in the San Diego area is a serious problem. Among other associated problems, residents identify car crashes and accidents (81%) as the most significant, followed by assaults (45%), fights (39%) and crime (39%).
- Nearly 9 in 10 residents (89%) say they are concerned that underage youth who drink in Tijuana park their cars on the U.S. side of the border and then walk into Mexico.
- More than 4 in 5 residents (82%) say that what alarms them about this situation is that intoxicated pedestrians get back into their cars on the U.S. side of the border and drive while drunk.

THE ROLE OF ALCOHOL PROMOTIONS

- After the legal drinking age of 18, residents cite the marketing and promotional practices of Tijuana bars and clubs as the most important factor contributing to underage youth in California crossing the border into Tijuana to drink alcohol.

- Almost 4 in 5 residents agree that ads for bars in Mexico specifically target underage youth in California (77%) and that cross-border drinking problems negatively affect the quality of life in local communities (78%).
- More than 4 in 5 (82%) of residents say they are either outraged or very concerned that California companies work on behalf of bars in Tijuana to get students and others to distribute marketing materials at high schools and colleges. Only 17% are aware that this occurs.

POLICY SOLUTIONS

- 80% of registered voters support a ban on all ads that target youth under 21 to drink in Mexico; 80% specifically support banning the distribution and display of promotions on school campuses that encourage minors to drink in Mexico.
- 79% of registered voters support a city or county ordinance that prohibits alcohol promotions from encouraging youth to drink in Mexico.
- 93% of registered voters agree that there needs to be stronger enforcement of existing laws against underage drinking to deal with alcohol-related problems at the border.

This fact sheet was produced by the Institute for Public Strategies, a nonprofit organization advancing public health through changes in policy and community norms. For more information, call (619) 474-8844, email info@publicstrategies.org or visit www.publicstrategies.org.

