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UCLA, Rand Corp., CAMY, & Dr. Jonathan Fielding Find Harmful Youth Drinking in Los Angeles Encouraged by Allowing Alcohol Ads on Public Property

Public Safety Committee Stalls Ad Ban, Los Angeles City Council Member Mitchell Englander May Have a Conflict of Interest

LOS ANGELES, CA (December 5, 2012) The Coalition to Ban Alcohol Ads from Public Property in Los Angeles (www.NoAlcoholAds.org) rallied outside L.A. City Hall this morning to announce the findings by four nationally respected researchers and institutions that provide clear and compelling evidence that alcohol advertising on city-owned property encourages youth alcohol consumption which leads to harm. They called upon the City's Public Safety Committee to act on this information, put the interests of public health and safety ahead of any special interests and stop stalling the passage of a ban on alcohol ads on city-owned property.

Ernest P. Noble, Ph.D., M.D., Director of the UCLA Alcohol Research Center wrote: "...A large systemic review concludes that exposure to ads and product placement, even those supposedly not directed at young people, leads to increased alcohol consumption. I strongly support legislation to prohibit alcohol advertising on city owned and controlled property. "

David H. Jernigan, Ph.D., Director of the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) at John Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland wrote: "...In the midst of high levels of youth exposure to alcohol advertising, what can a city do? Baltimore led the nation more than a decade ago in making our city safer for young people by banning alcohol and tobacco advertising in residential neighborhoods. Banning alcohol ads will help the city of Los Angeles play a positive role in reducing youth exposure to alcohol advertisements."

The Santa Monica-based RAND Corporation's document stated "...outdoor advertising provides constant visual reminders of products and services to citizens who must see them every day. In 2005, RAND conducted a large-scale drug prevention study. The researchers found that nearly half of the 7th grade nondrinkers became drinkers by 9th grade and the more ads youth saw during 8th grade, the greater the likelihood they fell into one of these two groups of 9th grade drinkers. Alcohol advertising clearly affects adolescent drinking."

Jonathan Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. Director and Health Officer for the County of Los Angeles stated that "...the proposed ordinance is in alignment with the current County of Los Angeles Code banning alcohol advertising on County owned or operated properties. Reducing the impact of alcohol marketing on young people is an important public health goal."

On June 13, 2012, the Los Angeles City Council Public Safety Committee asked that the City Administrative Officer (CAO) prepare a comprehensive report relative to a motion introduced by Council Member Richard Alarcón in the summer of 2011, calling for a ban on alcohol ads on public property. The CAO has had the documents being made public today since last summer.

"These respected national research institutions and the Los Angeles Director of Public Health, Dr. Jonathan Fielding, have answered the question of whether advertising alcohol ads on city property encourages and promotes youth alcohol consumption, and the answer is clearly yes," said Ruben Rodriguez, Executive Director, Pueblo y Salud. "Yet the City Administrative Office has failed to produce a report in seven months."

In 2008, Alcohol Justice released a comprehensive cost analysis showing more than \$38.4 billion in annual alcohol-related harm in California with more than a third of that damage occurring in Los Angeles. Underage drinking costs are a staggering \$7.3 billion annually. Youth violence, crime, car crashes, and high-risk sex are the most noticeable results.

"A very large body of research tells us that people who abuse alcohol or drugs are at far higher risk of committing acts of violence and self-harm," said Margot Bennett, Executive Director, Women Against Gun Violence. *"This is why Women Against Gun Violence is joining with the Coalition to Ban Alcohol Ads on Public Property to encourage the City of Los Angeles as well as other communities to limit alcohol advertisements."*

"Our youth are influenced by what they see on billboards, and the proliferation of alcohol advertisements contributes to their impression that drinking is a social norm," stated Susan Blauner, Director of Operations, Saving Lives Drug and Alcohol Coalition. *"Ineffective messages like "Drink Responsibly" ignore the fact that no drinking is safe drinking when it comes to our youth. It is imperative that our society take a stand to protect our youth from alcohol advertising."*

The research-based data on the dangers of exposing youth as well as other vulnerable people to alcohol-ads is clear. The more alcohol ads they see, the greater the chance they will over-consume alcohol which leads to alcohol-related harm. L.A. is plagued by over \$10.8 billion in alcohol-related harm every year.

"The City of Los Angeles, not a mecca for moderation to begin with, now makes money from advertising booze at their bus stops where young students congregate. And the ads are bigger than some of the children," said Leonard Buschel, Founder of the non-profit Writers in Treatment. *"I'm sure there are healthier products to promote so close to our kids."*

The coalition took the opportunity to also air questions of conflict of interest about City Council Member and Public Safety Committee Chair Mitchell Englander for failing to act upon the evidence and research and allow City Council Member Richard Alarcón's motion to ban alcohol ads on public property to receive a fair hearing.

"We need the corporations that bombard the city's youth and vulnerable residents with booze ads plastered all over city-owned bus shelters, street furniture, and billboards to find less lethal products to advertise," stated Michael Scippa, Public Affairs Director for Alcohol Justice. *"But they're not going to do it without a strong city ordinance requiring it. Unfortunately, a lobbying firm owned by a family member of City Council Member Englander represents the largest offender, French-owned JCDecaux North America. On the surface it stinks of conflict of interest. It reeks of allowing special interests to continue to make money while residents suffer and the city pays for alcohol-related harm. It's time for Mr. Englander to let public health and safety interests rule the day."*

Coalition Members include:

- American Indian Movement – WEST
- Alcohol Justice
- Asian American Drug Abuse Program Inc.
- Boyle Heights Stakeholders Association
- Boyle Heights Coalition for a Safe & Drug Free Community
- Coalition to Ban Billboard Blight
- Community Coalition
- Institute for Public Strategies
- Koreatown Youth & Community Center
- Mexican History Foundation
- P3 Partnership for a Positive Pomona
- Phoenix House
- Pilar of Fire Church
- Paso por Paso
- Pueblo y Salud
- Saving Lives Drug and Alcohol Coalition
- Sycamore Grove School
- Tarzana Treatment Centers & AWARE Coalition
- United Coalition East Prevention Project
- Woman’s Christian Temperance Union
- Women Against Gun Violence
- Writers in Treatment

Supporters include:

- Michael & Kitty Dukakis, former Massachusetts Governor & First Lady
- California Council on Alcohol Problems
- California Alliance for Retired Americans
- Center for Living and Learning
- County Alcohol and Drug Program Administrators’ Association of California
- Cri-Help
- Day One Pasadena
- Public Citizen
- San Fernando Valley Partnership
- Venice Neighborhood Council

For More Information go to: www.NoAlcoholAds.org



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