Tavern League of Wisconsin

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PRESS RELEASE

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Response to Wisconsin Binge Drinking Institute study

The Tavern League of Wisconsin, a non-profit trade association dedicated to serving the needs of the retail beverage alcohol segment of the hospitality industry in the State of Wisconsin, noted today a strong opposition to any legislation seeking to limit the operation of alcohol-dispensing institutions within the state.

“We understand the damage that can be caused by overconsumption of alcoholic products,” TLW president Terry Harvath said. “However, we believe that an overzealous group of individuals is taking action based on an incorrect perception that limiting access will limit dangerous behavior. Time and time again, that approach has created more harm than good.”

Earlier today, the Wisconsin Binge Drinking Institute and its president Dr. William Smith stated it would seek to limit the operation of all bars, taverns and other alcohol-dispensing businesses in when they would be allowed to serve alcohol. The group is seeking legislation that would ban alcohol sales at these places after midnight if they were within one mile of any college or university.

“College students represent only a very small portion of the consumers at these institutions, regardless of their proximity to a campus,” Harvath said. “To penalize these institutions, which serve to a broad array of patrons, would be unconscionable.”

“We at the Tavern League would also like to point out that every attempt to limit alcohol, from clamping down on 18-and-up beer bars in the 1980s to the Prohibition movement in the 1920s and 1930s has led to far greater problems. When alcohol is driven underground, responsible adults are treated like criminals and more of them tend to act like it,” he added

The TLW has established a code of ethics that seeks to limit service to those patrons who have had enough, to punish establishments for failing to enact safe behaviors and to provide free, safe transportation to individuals who need help.

“The Tavern League of Wisconsin believes in taking good care of our customers and protecting against the effects of alcohol abuse. We want our customers to have a good time and we are interested in their well-being,” Harvath said. “A law like the one proposed by Dr. Smith and his colleagues runs counter to everything we have learned as a state and as a country regarding overconsumption.”