New legislation enacts harsher MIP punishments

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Informed freshmen and all college students can feel good knowing two new pieces of legislation may help prevent underage drinking in Missouri.

The Missouri Senate Bill 402, which became law Aug. 28, mandates even adult residents who possess alcohol and distribute them to minors lose their driver’s licenses for six months. The Missouri House Bill 299, which became law Aug. 27, increases liability for proprietors of package store and businesses who publicize their drunken possession.

In Pursuit of Prevention, the Missouri university partnership that is distributing information on the new law, said the intent in combination with other measures can prevent possession.

"I’m certainly not saying that we couldn’t prohibit minors from possessing alcohol, but we’re just trying to put more focus on college students to help them understand that they are also responsible," said Travis Hughes, Kirksville police chief. "We want the focus to be on the host of the party, not just the guests."

The Missouri University Partnership that distributed information on the new law is also distributing materials on new laws, hosted by the Kansas City Police Department.

"It’s not only going to say, ‘Oh, man that’s something the police are going to say,’” Hughes said. "It’s going to say, ‘If you are not careful and are not aware of your surroundings, it’s only a matter of a second or two that something will happen to you.’"

According to a bill summary published by the Missouri Senate, the new law, also known as Bill 402, "is designed to increase liability on adults who host house parties by prohibiting the possession and distribution of alcohol to minors."

"I really am concerned that some students think this won’t be a problem," Hughes said. "They can incur some pretty significant legal consequences."

Whether or not on- or off-campus, students can feel good knowing two new pieces of legislation may help prevent underage drinking in Missouri.

Working in a college town was an important factor when Kirksville Police Chief Jim Hughes agreed to take on the position for the Kirksville Police Department. Though he has only been chief for two years, he said he sees the job done on DWIs, "It’s not going to take an active role, we close it down right there."

He said he foresaw no issues when he moved to Kirksville from Boulder, Colo., where he retired as Deputy Chief of Police.

"College communities have a certain vitality, a certain energy that other towns just don’t have," Hughes said. "We’re trying to work around with students with things of that quality, like doing, but there’s only a certain degree to which you can do that."

While he said he enjoys being involved with Truman students, the only negative side of being an on-campus police department is the increased stress from the relationship between the students and the police department.

"I think in any community in the United States today, the relationship between the student and the police department is not as good as it should be," Hughes said. "I think in any community in the United States today, the relationship between the student and the police department is not as good as it should be."

"If something feels unsafe to you, it probably is unsafe. You need to trust your instincts," Tom Johnson, Director of the Department of Public Safety, said.

Johnson, who retired in 2005 from the police department at the University of Iowa for 18 years before coming to Truman two years ago and said many times that off-campus students are not as careful as being aware of their surroundings. When they are aware of their surroundings. When they are aware of their surroundings. When they are aware of their surroundings.

"I’ve never felt threatened here at all," Johnson said. "It’s always a situation where people want and feel this is a safer place than any other campus in the state."

"It seems like doing, but it’s easy because it’s a nicer place, but the scenes just feel as safe as at home."

In addition, DPS provides various security services to make one’s on- or off-campus life easier. Johnson said one of the most popular services is the parking enforcement on campus and off by blue lights. When a call is made on the emergency phones, if you directly go to the dispatcher, who sends a DPS officer to help. Johnson also said he’s going to take one officer to these two stations to active. He said DPS also provides an escort service for anyone who does not feel comfortable walking across campus alone.

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