

## CO-SPONSORSHIP MEMO

TO: Legislative Colleagues

FROM: Rep. Adam Jarchow  
Rep. Rob Swearingen  
Rep. Cindi Duchow

DATE: Wednesday, November 8, 2017

RE: Co-sponsorship of LRB 4551/1 relating to: lowering the legal drinking age under certain circumstances

**DEADLINE: Friday, November 17, 2017**

At 19 years old, there are very few things that you cannot do. At 19, you have legally been an adult for one year. Most importantly (and honorably) can enlist in the United States military, travel thousands of miles away to fight for our country, but are not able to enjoy an alcoholic beverage.

Today, we are circulating a bill that would allow a 19 year old person to legally drink in Wisconsin as long as it would not result in Wisconsin losing our federal highway funds. If that situation is not possible, then this bill would not go into effect.

The age of 19 was chosen in order to make sure that high school students are not drinking, thus causing unnecessary distractions while still in school. However, after that, men and women 19 years of age or older should be able to make that decision for themselves whether to drink alcohol or not. Further, countless hours and hundreds of thousands of dollars go into enforcing drinking laws in this state, especially on college campuses. Those efforts could be used for other important issues such as drug abuse and sexual assaults.

**If you would like to sign on to LRB 4551/1, please email [Rep.Jarchow@legis.wi.gov](mailto:Rep.Jarchow@legis.wi.gov) or call 267-2365 by Friday, November 17<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m.**

### *Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau*

*This bill lowers the legal drinking age to 19 years of age if doing so will not result in this state's loss of federal highway funds.*

*Under current law, the legal drinking age is the age at which a person may legally purchase, possess, and consume alcohol beverages and enter premises licensed for the retail sale of alcohol beverages unaccompanied by a parent, guardian, or spouse. The legal drinking age in this state is currently 21 years of age. Under the federal national minimum drinking age law, a state that provides for a legal drinking age of less than 21 years is subject to withholding of 8 percent of federal highway aid annually.*

*This bill requires the state Department of Transportation to petition the federal*

*Department of Transportation for a determination as to whether lowering the legal drinking age in this state to 19 years of age will result in this state's loss of federal highway aid or other federal highway safety funds. If no such loss of federal funds will result, the bill lowers the legal drinking age in this state to 19 years of age.*