

# Sponsor Statement for HB 281

## Civil Liability for Providing Alcohol

*An Act relating to civil liability for providing alcoholic beverages to a person under 21 years of age; and providing for an effective date.*

**Released:** February 15, 2002  
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Under House Bill 281, an adult who knowingly furnishes alcohol to a person under the age of 21 can be held civilly liable for the resulting damages.

Recent tragedies have highlighted the problem of underage drinking and the consequences of adults providing alcohol to minors. Civil liability laws alone will not eliminate underage access to alcohol. However, they do take a step in the right direction. Adults who provide alcohol to minors should be accountable in civil court as well as criminal court.

In Alaska, as well as across the nation, underage drinking is a significant problem. Minor consumption is a factor in nearly half of all teen automobile crashes. Alaskan teens are 4 times more likely to cause fatal crashes when driving under the influence. It also contributes to suicides, homicides and fatal injuries, and is a factor in sexual assaults. Alcohol is readily available to minors because of irresponsible adults that knowingly serve, sell, and supply alcohol to minors.

Whether it is a parent, neighbor, or older sibling, adults must be held accountable when they provide alcohol to minors. Liability laws, such as HB 281, will hopefully assist in deterring adults from furnishing alcohol to minors.