



May 13, 2021

The Honorable Carolyn Maloney
Chairwoman
House Committee on Oversight and Reform
2308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James Comer
Ranking Member
House Committee on Oversight and Reform
2410 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Maloney and Ranking Member Comer,

Over the past year, alcohol consumption has increased due to a number of factors – lockdown measures, stress coping and a limited access to socializing among them. Quarantines and restaurant and bar closures have driven increased at-home drinking, consumer behavior that is confirmed by data showing alcohol consumption up since the pandemic began.

At the same time, we've seen a number of policy shifts that seek to further expand the public's access to alcohol. Today, Congress Member Speier plans to offer up an amendment that presents serious public health risks, in particular to youth. Her proposal to allow the shipment of alcohol through the USPS severely undermines existing – and effective – mechanisms for protecting public health and would make it easier than ever for underage drinkers to buy alcoholic beverages.

Alcohol is the drug most widely used by youth and is linked to serious consequences — like traffic crashes and fatalities, poor academic performance, increased dropout rates, addiction, sexual assault and suicide. Young people who drink are at higher risk for low self-esteem, anxiety and depression. If they start drinking before age 15, they're five times more likely to have problems with alcohol later in life.

Alcohol use is responsible for more youth deaths than all other drugs combined. It is also the substance they report as easiest to get. The alarming fact of the matter is that this proposal would make it even easier.

Currently, alcohol sales are structured within a three-tier system. Producers can sell their products only to wholesale distributors who then sell to retailers, and only retailers may sell to consumers. Congress Member Speier's proposal undercuts this system and opens the floodgates for underage access and misuse.

The three-tier system of alcohol distribution was designed to regulate distribution because alcohol is not an ordinary commodity. In part, this regulatory framework was put in place to protect the

public from alcohol misuse and associated harms. The checks and balances within the three-tier system provide a foundation to protect both public health and safety.

Allowing USPS delivery erodes these protections. It also takes away the safeguards that are designed to protect youth from a product that can cause significant harm to themselves and to others, particularly in cases of drunk driving. It creates new gaps in the system, new opportunities for our kids to take advantage of and for the alcohol industry to capitalize on.

We cannot allow this bill to move forward. We urge you to pause and consider the risks associated with this legislation — and that those risks clearly outweigh any benefit they may believe exists. It is our job as adults to protect kids, to limit their access to things that present harm and to make it harder — not easier — to access them. We hope come to the see the fact of the matter is this amendment is a misguided and dangerous policy to pursue.

We call on them to put kids first — and to put an end to this proposal.

Respectfully,

Nicole Holt
CEO
Texans for Safe and Drug-Free Youth