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March X, 2006

The Honorable XXX
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Dear _____:

On behalf of the International Institute for Alcohol Awareness and the undersigned organizations concerned with the youth health and safety threat of underage drinking, we strongly support the Justice Department's Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws (EUDL) program, and we urge you to continue supporting it at the current \$25 million level in the FY 2007 appropriations process.

The crisis of underage drinking continues to afflict families and communities across America. Its toll is staggering and the damage and suffering it inflicts is enormous. According to the 2003 report by the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies -- *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility* -- underage drinking costs us \$53 billion annually in death, injury, property damage, and economic loss. Each year, more than 3,200 Americans lose their lives to underage drinking.

In 1998, Congress established the Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws (EUDL) program to address this national crisis. The aim of this program is to prevent youth access to alcohol through enhanced enforcement focusing on the environments that contribute to youth substance abuse. This is currently the only federal initiative focused solely on preventing underage drinking that employs a science-based strategy that guides and supports state and local interventions.

This program has been evaluated and has demonstrated cost-effectiveness in its approach and reach. The EUDL program has increased law enforcement capacity to enforce underage drinking laws, engaged and trained youth to be leaders in combating underage drinking, increased prevention and public awareness efforts and is addressing the critical challenges of alcohol consumption on college campuses. This is a federal investment that has saved lives and prevented tragedies.

Historically, as you know, funding for the EUDL program has not been included in the Administration's budget because it is not authorized. Thanks to the strong leadership and continued support that you and your colleagues on the Subcommittee and in Congress

have provided, the program has been maintained. The youth and families you represent are deeply grateful for your continuing commitment to this program. Again this year, however, funding for EUDL is not provided in the Administration's budget.

Please do not allow the progress we have achieved to be wiped away. The national problem of underage drinking warrants continuation of the EUDL program. Communities in your state depend on the assistance and resources that it provides. As you and your colleagues craft the Justice Department bill appropriating funds for fiscal year 2007, we respectfully urge you to preserve the Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws program at its current funding level.

Your continuing support for this program will ensure that communities in your state have the resources they need to protect America's young people from the dangers associated with underage drinking. Moreover, it will help save lives and avoid the costs, consequences, and tragedies that result from illegal access to alcohol. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Jim Copple of the International Institute for Alcohol Awareness at 301-455-0654.

Sincerely,

James E. Copple
International Institute for Alcohol Awareness

On behalf of: