**PERSUASIVE SPEECH**

**FOR**

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Hello everyone. I am here today to speak about a subject that is relevant and topical, especially in these times in which we are living. Of all the questions we might pose and debate, this one ranks up there in "hot button" topics. I will ask you, "Should the drinking age be lowered to eighteen?" Before you begin to formulate your own responses, allow me to share my point of view, which is that, yes. I **DO** think the legal drinking age should be lowered to eighteen. Think about it: at the age of eighteen in this country, a young person reaches the "age of majority." He or she is able to purchase tobacco products. Eighteen is the legal age at which a person can be charged as an adult in a court of law, and the Twenty-sixth Amendment to the United States Constitution "prohibits the states and the federal government from using age as a reason for denying the right to vote to citizens of the United States who are at least **eighteen years** old."

Eighteen years of age is considered to be the beginning of adulthood. It's the dawning of the era of **responsibility**. At eighteen, we are, or should be, mature enough to make important, life defining choices. At eighteen we are mature enough to be accountable for our actions. John D. Rockefeller said, "Every right implies responsibility; every opportunity an obligation, every possession a duty."

In an opinion piece titled, " 15 Reasons Why Drinking Age Should Be 18, posted on [cognac.com](http://cognac.com), some very valid points were raised, and while even though the source would obviously be for this movement, valid points are raised. Among them are:

* If an eighteen year old has the right to vote and serve in the military, then they should have the right to purchase and drink alcohol
* By banning young people between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one from drinking, alcohol becomes "forbidden fruit" perpetuating a condition of "I want what I can't have."
* As long as alcoholic beverages are illegal to possess and difficult to obtain, it creates a condition of scarcity.... "If I can't have it but I just got it, I better really make this count and have as much as I possibly can get my hands on because who knows when I'll get another chance?
* In countries like Italy, China, and Greece, the legal drinking age is lower and they tend to have fewer alcohol related incidents. In these countries it is legal to allow sixteen year olds to have fermented beer and wine.
* Legalized drinking has more of a tendency to take place in public which has greater potential to be supervised by authorities.
* With a legal drinking age of eighteen, colleges and universities would have greater opportunities to monitor consumption- there would be less need to hide.
* This country tried Prohibition more than once. It was repealed because the laws could not be properly enforced and the backlash from attempted enforcement proved to be a big waste of time and resources. I think the nation and its leaders learned that if someone has the intention to do something, even if it's against the law, they will find a way. Although "speakeasies" and "bathtub gin" gained in popularity, as did increased organized crime activity, out of necessity, President Franklin Roosevelt and The United States Congress enacted and signed into law the 21st Amendment which repealed Prohibition.

I want to point out that age does not necessarily serve as a factor for recklessness and irresponsibility. There are many adults with alcohol related problems. In a study conducted in 2014, Alcoholics Anonymous noted that the average age of their membership is between forty-seven and fifty years old. Less than 3% of its membership are under twenty-one.

I want to say very seriously that I understand the negative side of lowering the drinking age. I also understand that as young adults we must find our own way in the world as we learn by our mistakes and our experiences. Having the legal right to drink alcohol doesn't mean I or my friends will abuse that power and maybe we will make our mistakes because of it and maybe we will LEARN. At some point in our lives, and I believe it should be sooner than later, we all face reality. If allowed to legally purchase and consume alcohol, we just may find a way to be more aware and responsible for our actions and conduct at an earlier age.

Thank you.