

CALCAP, ANEF & CCAGE

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EXECUTIVE REPORT — WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO



Dear Friends of CalCAP, ANEF & CCAGE

Sometimes it is important to remember why we at CalCAP do what we do.

Although there are hundreds of reasons, here are three basic ones. We do what we do because: 1) What we do is important; 2) We are often the only voice from the Faith Communities of California regarding the problems of alcohol and gambling (and sometimes the only voice – period); and 3) We are effective and we make a difference.

First, we only need to follow the various news reports to know that what we

do is important. Whether it is a report of a drunk driver killing a family, an underage student literally drinking herself to death, or another celebrity ruining his life with alcohol, these reports confront us on a weekly or even daily basis. Second, our voice needs to be heard. In this newsletter you will read examples of our witness to the problems of alcohol and gambling. Through our Legislative advocate, Fred Jones, and myself, we have offered verbal and written testimony and information to Legislative Committees, governmental boards, legislative staff members, national conferences, letters to newspapers and have been interviewed by radio and television.. Finally, what we do matters because we are making a difference. You will learn of some of our

successful battles with the wealthy and powerful alcohol and gambling industries. And, even when we do not gain a full and complete victory, we force these exploiting industries to settle for less than they wanted or expected. Without our resistance, our state would reap the terrible consequences of these two uncaring industries — unfettered and unlimited.

Thank you for helping us do what we do. It really does matter.

James B. Butler,
Executive Director

CALIFORNIA — RAISE THOSE ALCOHOL TAXES!

California is desperate for money!

Our state is facing a \$17 Billion budget shortfall, and this is generating many revenue-raising ideas among the Legislators and the Governor. Included in this thinking is expanding gambling through Lottery schemes and more slot machines at the casinos. However, one idea that is having trouble getting traction is a tax increase on alcohol.

Alcohol taxes have not been raised since 1992 and a recent study by a professor

at Berkley reveals that alcohol related costs in just health care, and the criminal justice system amount to \$17 billion a year (the budget deficit). If you count the social and other costs it is closer to \$30 Billion. It is time to raise alcohol taxes and force the alcohol industry to begin paying for the damage it is causing. It will also help reduce underage drinking because of the price increase, and it will even help balance the budget.

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A REPORT ON THE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION



On October 1, 2008, the Board of Equalization is prepared to implement the proper tax policy regarding “Flavored Malt Beverages” (Alcopops).

These are those colorful, sweet, fruit flavored, youth friendly alcoholic beverages that are often indistinguishable from soda or fruit drinks. These are the drinks that the A.M.A. identified as contributing to the increase in underage drinking. These are the drinks that contain hard liquor, but have been taxed



as beer. That is going to change, and the tax rate will go from 20 cents to \$3.30 per gallon. It is estimated that this will result in a state revenue increase of between \$40-50 Million.

After almost two years of hearings and testimony before the B.O.E., and arguments against the alcohol industry by our group and others, we were victorious and now this new policy is ready to begin. However, the alcohol industry has taken the battle to a new venue – the

courts. The alcohol industry, hoping to delay the starting date of the new policy, filed an injunction. This first court battle was won by the B.O.E., but a more difficult trial to overturn the policy is anticipated before October 1. We attended the injunction hearing and we plan to attend the trial as well.

This is proving a lesson we have long ago learned: “When you fight alcohol, even when you win, the fight is never over.”

SPEAKING TO A NATIONAL AUDIENCE

In June, Rev. Butler, the Executive Director of CCAGE, extended your reach and influence to the nation by speaking on two panels at the summer meeting and seminar of the “National Council on Legislators from Gaming States.” This national organization has members from the legislatures of states across the nation, as well as staff. This conference was attended by representatives from 26 states, along with reporters from newspapers and television.

His was a solitary voice of concern regarding the problems of gambling among those on his panels invited to discuss gambling issues across the country. As one might imagine, most of the representatives from these states consider gambling revenues “free money”, and are hoping

to fund more and more of their budgets by the illusionary promises (or more accurately, “delusional promises”) of the gambling industry. Rev. Butler provided a dose of reality.

The two panels on which Rev. Butler spoke were: “State Lottery Privatization Efforts” and “Internet Gambling Regulation and the WTO: Building to a Perfect Storm.” In each of these instances Rev. Butler was your voice identifying the problems, dangers and concerns with the expansion of these forms of gambling.

Among the specific issues raised were the exploitive natures of these types of gambling. He explained research has established, that the poor, in proportion to

their income, purchase more Lottery tickets than the middle class or the rich. The result of this unbalanced and inequitable participation means that the state has created and is benefiting from an unfair and regressive tax system. On the panel discussing internet gambling, Rev. Butler was able to provide the latest research indicating the growing problem of internet gambling, especially among teenagers and college age youth, and the terrible consequences predicted by the unleashing of what will become an ubiquitous form of gambling.

Because of your support, your influence is reaching beyond California. What we do really does matter.

KNOW DRUGS — NO DRUGS! AMT

No, I am not referring to the Alternative Minimum Tax. It is a drug.

You may not know that AMT is a drug, but unfortunately many of the children and youth of California do. AMT is the common name for “alpha-methyltryptamine”, which is a drug abused for the hallucinogenic and stimulative effects it produces. Other hallucinogenics in the AMT family include foxy, psilocybin, and psilocin.

AMT is available as a powder and is sometimes pressed into tablets or placed in capsules. AMT is typically abused by teenagers and young adults, and is often used at raves, nightclubs and other venues where the use of club drugs, like ecstasy, is

common. AMT users usually begin to feel the effects within 3-4 hours, and the hallucinogenic results may last for 12-24 hours, but may last for up to two days.

There are many negative physical and psychological effects produced by AMT. Included among the physical effects are visual and auditory disturbances and distortions, increased heart rate and blood pressure, blurry vision, dilated pupils, nausea, convulsions, coma, and heart and lung failure. Some of the psychological effects are terrifying hallucinations, a sense of estrangement, depression, anxiety and paranoia, violent behavior, confusion, suspicion, and behavior similar to

schizophrenic psychosis. It may also induce a catatonic state whereby the user becomes mute, lethargic, disoriented and makes meaningless repetitive movements. Further, the user may experience flashbacks. Finally, AMT diminishes the user’s inhibitions, which can result in high-risk sexual activity or accidental injury, and an overdose can lead to death.

There are hundreds of dangerous and deadly drugs that are available to our children and the youth of California. AMT is one of those drugs.

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE BEE

In response to an article in the Sacramento Bee that stated that AB 1245 was nothing more than an in-house squabble between brewers, Rev Butler responded with a letter that was published on July 25. The letter is printed below.

“Assembly Bill 1245 is much more than a battle between breweries. This bill will increase by 2,000% the value of the free gift beer companies can give away to encourage the consumption of their product. It is an effort by Anheuser-Busch (A-B) to circumvent the mandate of the original Alcoholic Beverage Control Act, and is of great concern to many in our organization.

A-B’s director of governmental affairs admits that this “swag” is not intended to change the drinking habits of adult drinkers. So, the question that must be answered is, “who do they hope to influence through this giveaway program?” If not adults, then the answer is clearly the youth of our state.

This effort, among many, to further erode and circumvent California’s legal and regularity protections has cost A-B \$390,000 in political contributions in the past two years alone. Maybe that explains how this bill passed the Assembly by a vote of 75–0, despite the opposition of other breweries. It seems a sad day when a rare unanimous vote is given to a company that wants to exploit, and eventually entrap our children in a bottle of Bud.

Rev. James B. Butler
California Council on Alcohol Problems”

Although letters to newspapers are not always published, every once in a while they are, so keep writing to your papers and share your concern and views with your neighbors!



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Rev. James B. Butler
Executive Director

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

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IT REALLY DOES MATTER!

OUR TASK AND MISSION

The CalCAP family, which includes the California Council on Alcohol Problems (CalCAP), the Alcohol-Narcotic Education Foundation (ANEF) and the California Coalition Against Gambling Expansion (CCAGE), is a statewide, faith based organization that seeks to prevent the moral, economic, scientific and social problems caused by alcohol and gambling. This is done through research, education, advocacy and lobbying. Thus, we raise the awareness of these problems among the people, and address the legislature regarding alcohol and gambling issues.

We are funded entirely by gifts from denominations, churches, church groups and individuals. We do not receive any financial support from any governmental agency or political party.

If you would like to be part of our information network, arrange for a program or preaching date, or support our work through-out California, please contact our Executive Director, the Rev. James Butler, or our Sacramento office, at 916 / 441-1844 or calcap@sbcuc.net. Our Mailing address is 803 Vallejo Way, Sacramento CA 95818.

Because CalCAP is involved in lobbying efforts, donations to CalCAP are not tax-deductible.

Donations to ANEF are tax-deductible.

AN IMPORTANT STEP IN PREVENTING SUBSTANCE ABUSE*

Currently only 2% of churches participate in substance abuse prevention programs. That is simply not good enough! It is important that churches strengthen their commitment to substance abuse prevention. This article is the third in a series that identifies actions churches can take to develop a prevention program, and will focus on an essential step. Churches must **“Put substance abuse prevention messages in the context of their Faith and Religious Beliefs.”** Below are four ways to provide that context:

1. Incorporate substance abuse prevention messages into the sermon series, homilies, newsletters, media ministries, religious education and parenting classes, retreats, camps and other youth and parent events.
2. Launch a local campaign to promote your faith community's commitment to substance abuse prevention. Develop your own themes and messages that clearly portray the spiritual benefits of being drug-free.
3. Develop or customize educational material that puts substance abuse prevention information in the context of your religious beliefs.
4. Select a day, a week or a month to celebrate your faith community's commitment to substance abuse prevention.

Because drug use affects everyone, and instilling strong values is an effective protective factor for preventing many high-risk behaviors, I hope that your church will take this important step in preventing substance abuse. In our next newsletter, I will present another step in helping churches strengthen their commitment to substance abuse prevention.

*Taken from “Four Ways to Include Drug Prevention in Your Religious Programs” — A.D.P.