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LITIGATION

Dear Parent (s):

Re: Underage Alcohol Abuse

Speaking as the Chief Law Enforcement Officer and your State's Attorney, I want to take this opportunity to relay the following message for your information and consideration.

In Carroll County, we are currently experiencing an alarming rate of underage alcohol abuse. This unlawful and potentially lethal situation is, in many instances, condoned and/or tolerated wherein adults and parents provide the alcohol or a location for consumption.

I want to make it clear that the aforesaid conduct is unlawful and potentially deadly. We are experiencing too many tragic vehicular injuries and deaths as a direct result of underage alcohol consumption. This underage, unlawful alcohol consumption is clearly detrimental to our children, and far too often results in a tragedy affecting all segments of our community.

Providing alcohol to minors can result in the following charges and will be vigorously prosecuted when sufficient evidence exists:

- 1) Contributing to a Child in Need of Assistance; Penalty: 3 years/\$5,000
- 2) Reckless Endangerment; Penalty 5 years/\$5,000
- 3) Manslaughter; Penalty: 10 years
- 4) Furnishing Alcohol to a Minor; Penalty: \$2,500

In addition, persons providing alcohol to minors or hosting parties at which alcohol is served to underage individuals may be subject to civil liability for their actions.

Persons under the age of 21 caught drinking may be charged (again, when sufficient evidence exists) with Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol, Automobile Manslaughter, Negligent Homicide by Motor Vehicle While Under the Influence of Alcohol, Being a Minor in Possession of Alcohol and can have their driver's license

suspended by the Motor Vehicle Administration for having the slightest amount of alcohol in their system. These criminal offenses are in addition to the sanctions that may be imposed by the school system.

I hope that you view this message seriously to ensure the safety of all children and the public at large.

In conclusion, I urge anyone with information in regard to underage alcohol abuse or persons that are facilitating this unlawful conduct in any fashion to inform your local law enforcement agency or call our anonymous TIPS hotline, at 410-386-2045 or 1-866-332-7363 (toll free).

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry F. Barnes
State's Attorney for Carroll County