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Steuben County Social Host Law

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Steuben County's local Social Host Law went into effect on February 2, 2015. The Social Host Law specifically addresses providing children with a place to use alcohol and drugs because of the risks involved in underage drinking and the reality that the younger children start drug and alcohol use the higher the probability they will move on to more dangerous drug abuse over time.

Under the Law, those who knowingly provide a place for children under 21 to use alcohol and/or illegal drugs face penalties including fines ranging from \$250 to \$1000; and jail terms from 15 days to one year.

As for enforcement – police and prosecutors are on the same page. DA Baker indicates this charge is be a priority prosecution, and that his Office will have a “zero tolerance” policy for violators. The Steuben County Police Chiefs have called enforcement of this law, which protects our youth, a priority for local law enforcement, promising these cases will be taken very seriously and thoroughly investigated.

Under the Penal Law of the State of New York, it is also a separate crime to provide another's child with alcohol. That misdemeanor level offense is punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000 and up to 1 year in jail.

Other criminal charges will be filed if something bad happens as a result of an adult providing alcohol to children – moving quickly into the felony range with fines upwards of \$5,000 and putting multi-year terms in New York State Prison in play.

There is simply no safe way to provide for an underage drinking event - sex offenses, fatal drunk driving crashes, alcohol poisoning and a myriad of other bad and preventable events flow directly from underage drinking – and between the Social Host Law and the Penal Law there is no legal way to provide alcohol for an underage drinking event or to provide a place for such an event to take place.

Good intentions or consent of other parents is not a defense to these charges. It is not safe. It is not smart. It is not worth it; and, **it is a crime to provide alcohol or a place to drink it to anyone under the age of 21.**