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## **Celebrate Twenty-First Amendment's Diamond Jubilee: Get Tough on Hardcore Drunk Drivers**

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The first Friday of next month, December 5, marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the repeal of national prohibition, the day when Utah – yes, Utah – became the 36<sup>th</sup> state to ratify the 21<sup>st</sup> amendment. Utah was joined that day by state legislatures in Pennsylvania and Ohio, making them the 37<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> states to ratify. Fourteen years after it had begun, the “great experiment” came to an end.

So how should we celebrate this diamond jubilee?

We could gather at our favorite pub to toast the leaders of the repeal movement, many of whom, as it turns out, had also been leaders of the prohibition movement. Among them were distinguished Americans like John D. Rockefeller, Jr., the du Pont brothers, Pauline Sabin and the recently enfranchised women of WONPR, the Women's Organization for National Prohibition Reform.

They had all reached the same conclusion that Mr. Rockefeller had come to. Prohibition to curb the harms that could come from abusing alcohol was a bad idea.

Or, after saluting the leaders of repeal, we could rail against the silly laws that remain on the books in many state and local jurisdictions and press forward to get these laws repealed, too. After all, does Alaska really need a law making it illegal to serve beverage alcohol to a moose?

Or, we could say that it is now time to complete the work that both those who favored prohibition and those who favored repeal agreed ought to be done: use the law as a powerful lever to rid the lives and families of ordinary Americans of the harmful consequences that come from the abuse of beverage alcohol.

The problem with prohibition is not that it was a law. The problem is that it was the wrong law. What we must do today is pick the right laws and pass them.

There is a large and growing consensus today that a leading candidate for at least one “right law” is comprehensive, hardcore drunk driving legislation. Diageo is going to press for such legislation beginning in January when state houses across the country return to work.

Hardcore drunk drivers are those who repeatedly drive with a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of .15 or more, about twice the legal BAC level in most states. They make up only about 1% of all drivers on weekend nights, but are responsible for nearly half the alcohol-related fatalities at that time. They are 380 times more likely to be involved in a crash than a non-drinking driver.

They don't listen to reason. They don't listen to PSAs. You have to throw the book at them: take away their licenses, limit or deny them access to their cars and trucks, put an ignition interlock on their vehicles once they do drive again, put them in jail, mandate treatment and aftercare.

We think putting laws like that on the books is the right way to commemorate both repeal and prohibition. It's the kind of law all of us who want to end alcohol abuse can and should stand behind – from the Women's Christian Temperance Union, who were there at the start of prohibition, to Diageo. We look forward to joining them, and everyone else concerned about stopping abuse, at state house doors across the nation come January to pass such legislation.