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Subject: MADD Mad Over Obama's 'Beer Summit'

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MADD Mad Over Obama's 'Beer Summit'

The so-called "beer summit" that President Barack Obama recently hosted at the White House has sparked a dispute between Mothers Against Drunk Driving and the alcoholic beverage industry.

Obama hosted the meeting over beers in the White House Rose Garden to smooth over any lingering hard feelings between Harvard professor Henry Gates Jr. and Cambridge police Sgt. James Crowley, who had arrested Gates at Gates' home.

After the meeting, the head of MADD's Delaware chapter, Nancy Raynor, said in an interview with station WDEL-AM in Wilmington, Del., "It's a well known fact that young people tend to mimic the actions they see of the adults."

The station summarized Raynor's comments as suggesting that convening the men over beer "could be a bad influence," Politico reported.

Sarah Longwell of the American Beverage Institute responded in a statement e-mailed to reporters: "MADD is no longer an organization that opposes drunk driving, but an anti-alcohol group that has been hijacked by the modern day temperance movement.

"That someone in a position of leadership at MADD would criticize President Obama for simply drinking beer illustrates the neoprohibitionist mentality that now dominates the group.

"MADD should return to its original mission of stopping drunk driving. The more time and resources the group spends pushing an anti-alcohol agenda, the more irrelevant it becomes."

Raynor told Politico about the group's statement, "This is very upsetting. I am trying to do the right thing, and this is what happens."

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