

Social Reparations: Re-Allocating Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Profits Toward Sexual Assault Care

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Due to Virginia's inadequate education on sexual assault prevention and inaccessible after-care, the Commonwealth should re-allocate 20 percent of profits made by the Alcoholic Beverage Control Department to provide sexual assault services to college students on public university campuses.

In 1997, the Virginia Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund was created to include services and compensation for victims of any crime due to the rapid increase of reported cases of sexual assault.¹ Sexual assault is defined by the Department of Justice as “any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient.”² Survivors are required to go through a forensic examination with intent to prosecute. Intending to prosecute is a significant responsibility put on recent survivors, and few alternatives exist; so, they are forced either to consent to this procedure and report the case or say nothing. Most sexual assaults occur on weekends between the hours of midnight and 6:00 AM.³ On-campus student health services at public universities are generally open during daytime hours on weekdays.

In April 2014, President Obama launched the “It’s on Us” campaign to increase campuses’ awareness of sexual assault and equip them with tools to prevent sexual violence on campus. The campaign has been successful in creating a dialogue on campus for students to become informed; however, it is not a comprehensive project that provides care for victims, nor does it introduce a permanent plan to educate students on the topic.

Because one in five women is sexually assaulted on college campuses,⁴ it makes symbolic sense to use that fraction to represent the amount of profit reallocated from the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) towards the creation of new programs and after-care options for victims. The ABC brings in \$134 million in profit each year.⁵ 20 percent would be approximately \$27 million to go towards the creation of programming on Virginia public college campuses.

¹ Virginia Worker’s Compensation Commission. “Procedures and Guidelines for Payment of Sexual Assault Examinations.”

² “What is Sexual Assault?” U.S. Department of Justice.

³ Krebs, C, C. Lindquist, T. Warner, B. Fisher, & S. Martin. “The Campus Sexual Assault (CSA) Study.”

⁴ Krebs, Christopher, Christine Lindquist, Tara Warner, Bonnie Fisher & Sarah Martin. “College women’s experiences with physically forced, alcohol- or other drug-enabled, and drug-facilitated sexual assault before and since entering college.”

⁵ “Financial Analysis” Annual Report 2013, Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control. <http://www.abc.virginia.gov/admin/annual/docs/2013ar.pdf>

⁶ Brecklin, Leanne & Sarah Ullman. “The Role of Victim and Offender Substance Abuse in Sexual Assault”.

⁷ “RN Salary in Virginia”. Indeed

⁸ “Cigarette Tax”. VA Department of Taxation.

⁹ Jerome Adda and Fransceca Comaglia. “The Effect of Bans and Taxes on Passive Smoking.”

Analysis

According to the Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 79 percent of reported sexual assaults occur when at least one party was under the influence of alcohol.⁶ Alcohol is often used as a scapegoat either to blame the victim or safeguard the perpetrator, and ABC should take responsibility.

The services provided will include the creation of an “after-hours” clinic, open 24 hours and staffed with one to two nurses. Based on Virginia averages, staffing each public university 24 hours a day, 365 days a year would cost approximately \$286,000.⁷ Additionally, programming on how to prevent sexual assault will be provided to educate students and staff to establish a standard of care. Such services are not provided at public universities in Virginia.

George Mason University (GMU) has very comprehensive options for “after-hours” healthcare, whereby an on-call nurse is available for students to contact at any hour, but this is not enough to give care immediately. Moreover, GMU provides only after-care services, not preventative ones. Preventative education must be provided if universities hope to decrease sexual assault on campus.

Next Steps

Due to extremely low tobacco costs in Virginia, the Commonwealth should lobby Big Tobacco to raise taxes to make up reallocated ABC profits. There is currently a \$0.30 excise tax on a pack of cigarettes in the Commonwealth, and, in fiscal year 2013, \$169 million was generated in revenue for the Commonwealth.⁸ If Virginia doubled the tax, the number of smokers would stay relatively the same, with a decrease of only one cigarette per day on average.⁹ The ABC reallocation program could then be scaled to move into other states with similar alcohol regulations. By successfully piloting such a program in Virginia, this campaign has the potential to be implemented on every public university campus in the country.

Key Facts

- The Department of Justice defines sexual assault as “any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient.”¹⁰
- College-aged women are four times more likely to face sexual assault than any other age group.¹¹
- At least 79 percent of reported sexual assault cases occur when at least one party is under the influence of alcohol.¹²

¹⁰ “What is Sexual Assault?” U.S. Department of Justice.

¹¹ “Financial Analysis”, VA Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control

¹² Krebs. “College women’s experiences with physically forced, alcohol- or other drug-enabled, and drug-facilitated sexual assault before and since entering college.”

Talking Points

- The number of reported sexual assault cases doubled between 2012 and 2013 at the University of Virginia.¹³
- There is no center that directly works to prevent sexual assault at universities in Virginia.
- Given the definition of sexual assault, one in 12 college-aged men admit to perpetrating this crime at some point in their college career.¹⁴

¹³ Dean Seal. "The Number of reported sexual assaults rises at UVA".

¹⁴ Warsaw, Fisher, Cullen & Turner. "National College Health Risk Behavior Survey."