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AUTHOR OF 21 DRINKING AGE AND .08 LAWS APPLAUDS NEW REPORT HIGHLIGHTING DANGERS AND COSTS OF UNDERAGE DRINKING

WASHINGTON, D.C. – United States Senator Frank R. Lautenberg (D-N.J.) applauded a new report released today from the National Academy of Sciences that provides a long overdue roadmap on tackling the epidemic of underage drinking, the nation's costliest-- yet most neglected -- youth substance problem.

"This report represents an important first step toward ending decades of complacency about one of the most damaging and widespread public health and safety threats facing our society today.

Underage drinking is threatening the lives of teenager's everyday all across the country and not nearly enough is being done to curb this epidemic. I have dedicated much of my life trying to protect young people from the problems caused by alcohol, authoring the laws that put the legal drinking age at 21 and lowering the blood alcohol level to .08. But more must be done and this report underscores the need to do much more to raise public awareness about the risks and harms of underage drinking.

The liquor lobby has a great deal of influence over Congress and the Bush Administration, but this Senator will fight hard to push legislation that can protect young people and families from the ravages of underage drinking, prevent needless tragedies, and reduce future addiction."

Senator Lautenberg is the author of 1984 law that set a national 21 year old drinking law, which has helped save thousands of lives and prevented many more from grievous injury. Lautenberg authored the .08 law, which will prevent about 500 drunk driving deaths per year by requiring states to lower their Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) levels to .08.