



Below are personalized responses sent to Presidential Candidates John McCain and Barak Obama in response to Marin Institute's Action Alert (dated 10.15.08) that asked them to return alcohol industry donations.

As one who has come in contact with a large number of alcoholics and drug addicts both personally and professionally, I cannot imagine my president taking the amount of money you have received on behalf of the alcohol industry. Either you need more education, or you are greedy.

San Jose, CA

Every day in America, 7,000 kids under 16 take their first drink of alcohol. Kids who begin drinking below the age of 15 are 5 times more likely to become an alcoholic! And every year on college campuses, 1600 kids die every year from binge drinking. What are the big alcohol companies doing about this. NOTHING!!! Alcohol is the number 1 drug of choice in America. Please think about this when considering whether to take their money or not. I hope that you send it back.

Kendallville, IN

I work in alcohol and drug treatment and see the lives devastated by drinking and drug use everyday. My husband is an alcohol and drug counselor who also works with the homeless as well. Please consider sending a message to the alcohol co's as well as the pharmaceutical co's who make money off the suffering of others. Stand up and be a man of God with a conscience. We work hard in the battle against the disease of addiction.

Conway, SC

Underage drinking is our greatest drug problem in America, yet we have no federally funded alcohol education campaigns for youth and parents. Our youth are growing up in an alcohol-saturated environment, and alcohol misuse is ruining and ending too many lives. Now the elections process and the ability to enact effective alcohol polices to protect children is tainted.

Olympia, WA

I work in a middle school and see the impact of alcohol on our children every day. I am not comfortable with either of our presidential candidates accepting funds from the alcohol industry and wish for their return.

East Hampstead, NH

As a voter, I do not want our national agenda to be influenced by the alcohol industry.

San Diego, CA

Are you aware that prenatal exposure to alcohol is the leading cause of birth defects, brain damage and developmental disabilities? Do you realize that most women of childbearing age drink and that they often do not know they are pregnant until 30-60 days after conception? Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) are 100% preventable! Please don't allow the alcohol industry to even look like they are influencing you and your running mate.

Bakersfield, CA

I facilitate a support group for parents of children suffering from alcoholism/addiction in Massachusetts and see the ravages of this disease daily. Please do to alcohol companies what has been done to the tobacco industry!

Ludlow, MA

It is with a heavy heart that I advocate a drug-free lifestyle. I, a minor, am influenced by the alcohol companies. Tempting adds fill my head, and it is important that campaigns do not endorse such a corrupted business. If America's leaders are built with corrupted businesses then how are we to be an upright nation? I ask this, and answer our administration will follow suite in corruption.

Manteca, CA

This campaign is about hope for something different for this country -- I hope that includes leaders who are not obligated in any way, shape, or form to the alcohol industry. We have seen the problems in our financial markets that are caused when government takes a hands-off approach. Let's not make the same mistake when it comes to regulating alcohol, and the first step is to ensure that we can have an objective, no strings attached relationship with the alcohol industry.

Sacramento, CA

Alcohol-related harms cost us \$200 billion a year and 100,000 lives. Please become proactive on dealing with this immense public health issue. Return Big Alcohol's big bucks and take no more. If you become president, attack this problem head-on by not

allowing lobbyists from Big Alcohol to influence progressive national policies that will reduce the harms.

Tiburon, CA

As a professional working in the field of addiction prevention, treatment and recovery services, we are sending the wrong message to our youth, families and communities by putting big alcohol's profits above people.

Springfield, IL

As a single parent of two boys, I know the great influence I have in leading by example. The choices, both good and bad, positive and negative, have the potential the lifelong consequences in the lives of my sons. It is my hope and concern that the next president of my beloved United States would act in a similar fashion. Leading by example and making better choices, such as not accepting funding from the alcohol industry is what influences me to make a wise choice in voting on November 4th. Please be brave and make the change.

Chardon, OH

There is no place for ANY big business donations in presidential elections or any other elections. It only compromises the integrity of elected and appointed public office policymakers. In addition, alcohol and tobacco has negatively influenced our youth for far too long. Both of these big businesses should not be allowed to influence our policymakers in any way.

Ventura, CA

Big Alcohol causes too much pain, too much loss. Your campaign is tainted when you take their money.

Tiburon, CA

With the epidemic of addiction in this country, the rising numbers of underage drinkers and all the related social problems caused by alcohol, I am appalled that you would accept money from the alcohol industry. Taxes on alcohol need to be raised, as they have been on tobacco.

Fort Totten, ND

Return the money!! You are encouraging the problem!!

Corning, NY

I work with young people and see the effects and influences of the alcohol industry every day. We need clear and unbiased decision making guiding the policies of this country regarding alcohol, its availability and advertising.

Hillsborough, NC

Alcohol has been a main source of wrecked families since the beginning of time. IF you will just use the old formula "EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST TEACHER" you will find a much happier life for all of America. Just think where our crime rate will go! DOWN, DOWN and to almost zip. NOTHING, compared with today's figures. I realize you will be loosing money, BUT; would you rather loose your money or your soul. The choice is yours; The far of God is the beginning of wisdom.

Bedford, TX

We've had a president from Illinois before. He took a stand. I hope the next president can have as much backbone.

Hinsdale, NH

Alcohol abuse in America is one of the chief problems that we face as a Nation. A recent study showed that nearly half of all advertisements for alcohol are seen by an audience in which less than half of the population is old enough to drink. This type of marketing is specifically targeting the youth of our Nation. As a 16 year-old person, I see firsthand the effects of this. Teen drinking, which can lead to drunken driving and alcohol poisoning are some of the great harmful effects. And an even greater effect is alcoholism. When someone takes their first drink of alcohol at age 16 or younger, they become more than twice as likely to become an alcoholic in the future. The youth make up the future of our nation and we do not want to be a nation run by alcohol, as we are becoming.

Alcohol is advertising everywhere; on billboards near schools, on television, on radio, etc. One place where alcohol should have not have an influence is in politics. This election is particularly riveting for our country and is watched by millions of people, many of which are young people. By accepting money created by alcohol, politicians are setting a very bad precedent. It is accepting lobbyist money and promoting a bad, unhealthy future.

As a concerned minor, I have no vote in this election. However, I hope to see that alcohol has no place in politics, especially presidential politics, in any time, whether it be the present, the near-future, or the far off tomorrow.

Tracy, CA

Allowing alcohol companies to fund an immense portion of the presidential election is sending a bad message to America. If the next President of the United States is accepting money from alcohol companies, it is a clear message to America that alcohol

is not an issue or a problem in our country. To underage students like myself it sends a message that alcohol is okay. The message is if the President is supporting the alcohol companies, there must not be a problem with it and this message in turn encourages underage drinking.

I believe that there are other sources that can fund the presidential elections and can be a positive influence on America. The President needs to advocate positive aspects for this country, and needs to support things that benefit the people. Advocating a drug-free lifestyle is one of the many aspects that acts as a positive influence on the people.

Lockeford, CA

The currently seated president is an alcoholic. Perhaps so many young Americans would not be maimed for life as a result of an illegal war if someone with that much alcohol brain damage was not sitting in the White House.

Laguna Beach, CA

Using money for your campaign that has come from alcohol companies is wrong. Be an example to the nation and don't allow them to financially support you or your campaign, if you can't win without their donation, then you probably shouldn't be running for president.

Stockton, CA

The alcohol companies have become detrimental to our society. By placing their ads in places highly populated by young people. These places range from fairs, sports events, and other family events.

Now the alcohol companies are trying to become involved in the election, not to help the candidates, but to acquire more publicity for their products. They are donating large amounts of money to the candidates in order to gain exposure. They have already had a negative effect among the youth and by accepting their donations and giving them the publicity they desire, you are only aiding to the problem that will have a highly negative outcome among the youth of our nation.

So please, return the large sums of money that the alcohol companies have donated. It would not only help our nation's youth, but it will also make you a better choice. Alcohol has no place in the presidential election, so please do not allow them to gain publicity through your campaigns and the rest of the election.

Stockton, CA

Return all alcohol contributions, as we know they are always connected to access. Some ads give the impression that it answers all our insecurities and builds our self-esteem. The reverse is evident, especially how it influences our youth.

Baldwin Park, CA

Of great importance

San Francisco, CA

We need to take a more enlightened approach to alcohol policy in the US. We must put public health and safety first. There are cleaner sources of money for presidential campaigns.

Berea, OH

Your actions set the tone for how our country prevents and protects our youth from an industry that causes so much monetary and emotional pain and loss. If the research and programs show that environmental prevention works and is a government funded proven strategy we are mandated to use, such as reducing the number of liquor stores in a neighborhood, or ordinances that fine parents who allow teen drinking parties...then please eliminate the mixed message the money your campaign accepts from alcohol interests. Please!

Cedarpines Park, CA

Today's youth are greatly influenced already by the advertisement of alcohol and as the voting age starts at 18, then young voters will see any alcoholic support for a campaign and this will send the wrong message. Please refrain from accepting their donations, please take this step and abstain from influencing our youth in ways I am sure were not your intentions.

Idleyld Park, OR

This may seem like a lot to ask, but I think it is important, especially for our younger people who are so easily influenced by strong example set by outstanding public figures and national leaders.

San Francisco, CA

Alcohol is the number one killer of our young people. The alcohol industry knows that if they don't get children to use alcohol by age 21, these young people will not consume much alcohol throughout their lives. Therefore, the industry has to market to children. How can you legitimize these merchants of death?

Omaha, NE

For every dollar we collect in alcohol taxes we spend over seven dollars trying to address the caused by alcohol consumption. Our nation can no longer afford this outrageous disparity. We need a government that is not beholding to industries that sell products that cause so many serious problems for our citizens and cost resources that we don't have.

San Marcos, CA

I am particularly concerned, Sen. McCann, with your wife's ownership of a huge alcohol distributorship and how her interests might affect the country if you were in power.

Alcohol lobbying has a huge effect on the city in which I live, Long Beach, CA and should be stopped. Please help protect us from the big alcohol interests.

Long Beach, CA

I spent 39 years in our secondary public schools watching the needless, criminal waste of young lives brought about in part by the cynical enticements promising excitement and success through the use and abuse of alcohol. Responsible use, indeed!

Please review Jean Kilbourne's video "Calling the Shots" for the truth. These contributions are truly blood money. Don't dirty your hands, please.

Belchertown, MA

I know it is difficult to turn generous contributions away, but I am concerned about the alcohol industry's influence over those it pays. We have a very big underage drinking problem in our state and a very serious drunk driving problem as well. Communities are working tirelessly to prevent these problems, but we need your support.

Santa Fe, NM

When they give you funds, they expect something in return. Please think of the children and youth of this country when making this decision. Your acceptance of these funds sends different messages to different age groups and populations. I do not believe it is the message that you want sent to your children!

Salisbury, MD

As a father of three young women, this is an issue of great importance to me. I am looking to you to be a role model for my children and others by taking this significant step.

Houston, TX

It is too bad that money is what gets most elected. It is too easy to look at who paid for your run in the past-your wife, Mr. McCain, and her money is from the alcohol industry. Mr. Obama, don't fall into the trap and make your own decisions for ethical and moral reasons

Glide, OR

The alcohol industry contributes to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs) which effects thousands of people in Wisconsin, including my adopted son. Although the birth mother was the one who consumed the alcohol, the alcohol industry does little to take an active role in educating people of all ages, the dangers of consuming alcohol while pregnant or of child bearing age.

Bayfield, WI

The tax payer already suffers enough in this country. Everyday we have to pay to clean up the mess alcohol creates and the industry pays nothing in return.

Grand Forks, ND

I'm tired of seeing "special industry interests" gaining so much power and influence on our political system through their substantial donations! How will you protect American citizens from this serious conflict of interest?

Roswell, GA

Every time I read about a young person under the age of 21 dying in an alcohol related incident, I grieve for the life and expectations lost. Over 5,000 young people under the age of 21 die annually in this country from alcohol-related incidents. The alcohol industry targets our youth. Please do not accept contributions from them and do not let them color your agenda.

Hoosick Falls, NY

I am an alcohol researcher and am acutely aware of the problems of promoting alcohol to youth and ethnic minority populations.

Berkeley, CA

Please do not take any money or liquor contributions from the liquor companies, because it does influence the way you will vote on their issues. Keep the country alcohol and drug free.

San Fernando, CA

Please do this today to save our children and youth from certain brain damage and delayed intelligence.

San Francisco, CA

Underage drinking and excessive alcohol consumption by adults is a problem in Pitt County, North Carolina where the Pitt County Substance is located. Excessive alcohol consumption and early initiation of alcohol consumption contribute to the loss of productivity to our community from those who are ensnared in alcohol addiction. The economic loss from alcohol addiction is greater in our community than any benefit a leader could receive from accepting contributions from the alcohol industry.

Greenville, NC

I, William, am a recovering alcoholic & drug addict, also am a drug counselor here in Warm Springs, Or. I have seen a lot of devastation since I've been in recovery among my tribal people and the surrounding communities. In treatment, there were members of my group who were in the process of losing their business, homes, families, and self-esteem. There have been numerous deaths here in Warm Springs attributable to alcohol/drugs. I pray and admonish you to seek what "God almighty" would have you to do concerning where you receive donations.

Warm Springs, OR

I have worked in alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse prevention for most of my professional life, and the abuse of these substances continues to undermine health and public safety of our nation's citizens. I doubt that either of the current presidential candidates accepts funding from the tobacco industry. I'm certain that both candidates understand that alcohol consumption is the SECOND leading cause of preventable death in the US - trailing only tobacco. It only makes sense that both candidates strongly consider their decisions, and that of their parties, to accept contributions from this industry.

Rockford, IL

I expect my government to be on the right side of this issue--the same side as the U.S. Surgeon General, who has called the country to action on this very important public health issue.

Fall River, MA

The tax payer already suffers enough in this country. Everyday we have to pay to clean up the mess alcohol creates and the industry pays nothing in return.

Grand Forks, ND

Too many families are ruined by the abuse of alcohol and too many older people find that it inhibits their lives as they get older. The support of this industry that cannot regulate itself needs to be increased to protect both children and the elderly.

Morgantown, WV

Alcohol is one of the biggest health problems in our nation, but one that has consistently flown under the radar. Any comprehensive approach to cutting back on our nation's health care costs has got to include addressing the negative impact alcohol has on our society.

Hillsboro, ND

I work at a non-profit that provides technical assistance and training to agencies offering prevention and recovery services to the Asian and Pacific Islander community. Through my job, I've learned about the many ways alcohol can ruin the body and heard from recovering individuals the ways their addiction ruined their families. Support from the alcohol industry reflects poorly on both Senator McCain and Senator Obama.

Los Angeles, CA

I am a Drug Prevention Specialist and have been working to prevent alcohol, tobacco and other drugs from damaging or killing our country's youth for the last five years. We have had victories in some of the small battles but have a long way to go to win the war! We need powerful leaders, like you, to make a stand and help us fight the battle that is killing our citizens and is the major cause of crime and destruction in America.

Ozawkie, KS

As a substance abuse prevention specialist I see on a daily basis the long term health implications that alcohol consumption has on our citizens.

Winthrop, MA

I work with our young people who are over-saturated with the alcohol message everywhere they turn. Do you really need the support of corporations who target under-age students? Consider the cost of rehab, loss of productivity, higher insurance rates, the devastation to families as a result of alcohol abuse, etc.

You are to be the embodiment of all that is good and right in America. Please take the trust you are asking for from the American people seriously.

Wheeling, WV

Personally, it appears to me the alcohol industry has paid off the candidates far too long. Time for change fellows....We are hearing this daily from both sides...let's see it...Start with the return of these contributions. If that is not acceptable, then re-gift the contributions to treatment centers with proven successes.

West Chester, OH

I'm tired of seeing "special industry interests" gaining so much power and influence on our political system through their substantial donations! How will you protect American citizens from this serious conflict of interest?

Roswell, GA

The tragedy of alcoholism touches every American. Granted, alcohol is a legal drug for those of a determined age, and can be used socially in moderation as a part of many events and traditions. Nevertheless, its excesses cost our nation billions of dollars each year in lost lives, productivity, health consequences and treatment for addiction. Any attempt to persuade legislators to reduce appropriate guidelines for its use is inexcusable.

Columbus, OH

My Dad died from cirrhosis of the liver when I was sixteen years old. He began drinking at ten years old. Research shows that the younger a person begins drinking, the more likely he is to become chemically dependent. I now coordinate efforts in Mason County, IL to prevent underage substance use. I keep an eye out for the alcohol industry's marketing and I am disgusted at their efforts to target youth. There is not any legal organization more responsible for teenage violence, school drop-out rates, pregnancy, deaths, crime, and so much more. Such an irresponsible organization that provides a product that is to blame for so much devastation has NO place in our political system.

Normal, IL

Alcohol cannot be exempt from being called a drug simply because of its popularity. It has proven itself far more costly, in both economic and human terms, than other illicit substances.

Denton, TX

Because I know you are interested in doing the right thing because it is the right thing to do, please act on this request!

Garland, TX

Your pledge to stand up to the special interests should apply ESPECIALLY to the alcohol and tobacco lobbies, whose products contribute massively to national public health and safety costs.

Arlington, VA

As a patriotic American citizen it worries me that alcohol is not only contributing to your campaign financing, but that it has become part of the actual convention and debate process.

Tucson, AZ

As a parent of four, now grown, children and working with many youth I see every day how the alcohol industry markets to our youth. Alcohol is the number one cause of death among teenagers in America today. Please reconsider taking funds from this industry. Just like tobacco they work very hard at developing new customers.

I hope you will reconsider and stop taking funds from the alcohol industry. They will have big expectations of you once elected. I know it is big money but let's not turn our backs on the youth of America.

Schenectady, NY

As a prosecutor, I see every day the cost of alcohol use and abuse on adults and children alike in our communities. The alcohol industry continues to search for new ways to attract the youth to their product and encourage over use that often times leads to criminal prosecution or even worse, death. The industry does not self regulate and continues to push for more legislation that will only allow more sales.

Cozad, NE

Much like the financial crisis, the alcohol industry unregulated has resulted in an increase in youth exposure and harmful consequences. Your leadership skills will be required to start an important conversation on how these companies contribute to our public health problem.

Ann Arbor, MI

As a prevention coordinator for Columbus City Schools in the areas of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and violence I am very careful not to use funds from organizations that promote youth use of alcohol or tobacco products. I recommend that you do the same.

Sunbury, OH

Alcohol has devastated too many families, including my own. Please don't encourage the industry in any way.

Fort Worth, TX

Of particular concern is underage drinking and the resulting cost in economic and personal terms. Our county's youth is the future for the nation. Please consider the health and safety of all citizens, and most especially of our young people.

Columbia, SC

Big Alcohol causes too much pain, too much loss. Your campaign is tainted when you take their money.

Tiburon, CA
