

# Policy making, federal system essay examples

[Health & Medicine](#), [Alcoholism](#)



The states and Congress have always been at logger heads on how to divide or share responsibility in governing the country. The states have for a long time protested some acts of the Congress, which in their assumption undermine their independence and autonomy. This was witnessed during the Civil War and has spread to other political issues. There are areas such as national defense, which lie in the federal domain. However, the Constitution is unclear in what levels the national and other levels are in charge. The Supreme Court is therefore forced to referee in the disputes by deciding whether the states or the federal government has the ultimate responsibility. The Supreme Court ruling on Obamacare can affect the act, which was passed in 1984 by the Congress. The act made it illegal for any person in America under the age of 21 to buy or openly possess alcohol (Timothy, 1998). The drinking laws are always a states issue, and the federal government has been able to implement the minimum age through the Federal Aid Highway Act. For about 28 years, states have been required to maintain the minimum authorized drinking age at 21 or lose the Federal Highway Funding. Federal Highway Policy like the federal rules on minimum drinking age is an example of a policy that is in the middle of the cross currents between national, state and local authorities. The policy has a potential for conflict or tension in the different levels of government. Various federal agencies play a significant role in preventing immature drinking. The agencies fund efforts which include targeting alcohol and other drug use in underage persons. The state of South Dakota, in 1987, challenged the law that permitted the sale of beer having around 3.2 percent alcohol to persons of 19-year-olds (Levy & Asch, 1987, p. 189). This

led to case in the Supreme Court. The court ruled that it was legitimate for Congress to exercise the threat of financial penalty to make states performing some things, like enforcing a minimum age for drinking. This is as long as the situation that the penalty is enforced is unequivocal, promotes the people's welfare, and relates to the federal concern to programs or projects. Additionally, the condition has to fit within the 10th Amendment that defers powers to states which are not approved by the Federal Government or illegal by the Constitution.

Federalism is the sharing of responsibility in governing the nation. In America, federalism implies that the national government, about fifty state governments, and several thousands of local governments operate at varied levels. Timothy (1998) says that the federal government by 21st century dominated the affiliation. Various Supreme Court decisions have improved the federal authority, and various flow of federal money to the state and local authorities. The state and the local governments have found it impossible to decline their share of tax dollars. This happens even when the money comes with policies and rules which encroach on their independence. The Congress, in the 1960s and 1970s, became accustomed to setting state goals and offering other authorities money to utilize in achieving their goals (Bellows, 1980). The situation has led to novel sweeping programs that gave rise to most of the existing policies. The advantageous liaison with the federal government became less striking to the state and local authorities who started to oppose federal demands. The previous arguments on states' rights gave rise to new appeals. This was after many centuries after the Constitution had tried to separate local and national responsibilities.

The minimum underage law helps in saving lives. This is through preventing traffic fatalities that are alcohol-related for the underage. The minimum age limit can also help in protecting the adolescent and young adults from negative consequences. Timothy (1998) argues that this is because the adolescent brain development is affected by alcohol severely compared to the adult brain. Additionally, people who start to drink earlier are more prone to alcohol related and dependence problems later in his life.

Conversely, setting the minimum drinking age at 21 years has some cons. The benefits of 21 year-old drinking age have some offsets which are unintentional and fundamentally negative consequences (Timothy, 1998). The drinking age is a condensation of the majority of those who drink. Moreover, the age leads to ethical compromises and disrespect of the law. Many young adults engage in excessive drinking because of putting the age limit. This can be witnessed in communities or campuses where there is an alarming rise of drinking, and this has caused some significant health problems in the nation. The drinking age marginalizes the responsibility of parents by encouraging and teaching accountable decisions on alcohol use (Tauchen and Cook, 1984).

In conclusion, Federal Highway Policy like the federal rules about minimum drinking age is an example of a policy that is in the middle of the cross currents between national, state and local authorities. The policy has a potential for conflict or tension in the different levels of government. The minimum legal drinking age has been a contention between federal and state governments. A relationship exists between minimum legal drinking age and traffic consumption plus alcohol consumption and traffic crashes.

The state and federal governments have a responsibility in enforcing the constitution. Nonetheless, the responsibility of reducing and preventing underage drinking lies with the national community. The minimum drinking age laws which are enacted and enforced by the government emphasize society's efforts in curbing underage drinking (Smith, Mackenzie & Bako, 1976). The effectiveness of the laws depends on the dynamic support of various stakeholders in the society. The state and federal governments have significant opportunities in enacting and enforcing the pertinent laws that encourage and coagulate the laws. Moreover, the governments need set up the indispensable apparatus to supervise trends of underage drinking and the efficiency efforts to decrease, and support the required research.

## References

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