

COMMITTEE BILL ANALYSIS

Bill: Senate Bill 941

Printer's No.: 1116

Sponsor: Senator Corman

Prepared by: Gregg Warner

Synopsis: This bill amends sections 5505 and 6308 of the Crimes Code, Title 18 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, to increase the fines for public drunkenness and underage drinking.

Summary:

Section 5505

Section 5505 makes it a summary offense for a person to appear in any public place manifestly under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance to the degree that he may endanger himself or other persons or property, or annoy persons in his vicinity. Currently a summary offense carries a fine of not more than \$300 unless otherwise provided (18 Pa.C.S. §1101). As amended, a person convicted of violating section 5505 may be sentenced to pay a fine of not more than \$1,000.

Section 6308

Section 6308 makes it a summary offense if a person less than 21 years of age attempts to purchase, purchases, consumes, possesses or knowingly and intentionally transports alcoholic beverages. Currently a summary offense carries a fine of not more than \$300 unless otherwise provided. Section 6308 imposes a fine of not more than \$500 for the second and each subsequent violation. As amended, a second or subsequent offense may result in a fine of not more than \$1,000.

Application

The amendments to sections 5505 and 6308 shall apply to offenses committed on or after the effective date of this act.

Effective date

This act takes effect in 60 days.

Background: According to the sponsor, “alcohol abuse violations in or around college and university campuses are becoming increasingly difficult to manage. The negative impacts of these violations are growing and affecting the community, schools and students alike.” To address this issue, “Increasing these fines to a maximum of \$1,000 will not only provide an increased disincentive, but it will also allow the municipalities that feel the impact of these offenses to receive additional funding from fines.”