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Rep. Steffen Issues Warning for Travelers to Mexico Regarding Tainted and Illicit Alcohol
Illegally produced alcohol being served in Mexico resulting in blackouts, injury and even death

Madison- State Representative David Steffen (R-Howard), as Chair of the Wisconsin Assembly Committee on International Affairs and Commerce, is urging Wisconsin travelers to Mexico to exercise extreme caution if consuming alcohol, especially tequila, during their visit to Mexico. Recent reporting has uncovered a disturbing number of incidents involving visitors to Mexico falling victim to tainted or illegally produced alcohol, which can result in blackouts, injury and in the most unfortunate circumstances, death.

A Milwaukee Journal Sentinel investigation reported more than 140 incidents of travelers to Mexican resorts experiencing blackouts and/or becoming ill after consuming small amounts of alcohol, particularly tequila. Additionally, Mexican authorities recently seized thousands of gallons of illegal alcohol, some of which was laced with methanol. The same report noted that the Mexican government is familiar with this issue and has determined that up to 36% of all alcohol being served in Mexico is illegal. Illegal alcohol poses a real danger, as it is manufactured without regulatory safeguards. The need for awareness on this issue is critical.

In a letter to U.S. Department of State Secretary Rex Tillerson, Rep. Steffen urged the Department to, "... proactively warn Americans of the increasing dangers related to illicit and tainted alcohol in Mexico and to take every step possible to assist our citizens who have fallen victim to this crime while traveling." Additionally, to, "...review all related records and cases in order to determine ways in which the Department can actively intervene and help in reducing this dangerous threat."

Today, Rep. Steffen also noted, "As many students and families prepare for spring break trips to Mexico, the need for extreme caution is critical. Moreover, the United States Department of State must take action on this issue to ensure the safety of our citizens visiting Mexico.

"I strongly urge visitors to Mexico to exercise extreme caution when considering alcohol consumption in Mexico, especially tequila-based drinks. The numbers of victims and volume of illegal, illicit and toxic alcohol in Mexico is too big a threat to ignore. Extreme caution is warranted," said Rep. Steffen.

The U.S. Department of State is directing victims of these crimes to contact the U.S. Embassy Consular Office. Additionally, victims can contact the State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs at (888) 407-4747 to report an incident involving tainted alcohol in Mexico. Victims are also encouraged to notify Mexican authorities at: contactociudadano@cofepri.gob.mx.

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