

KOHL'S Agrees to Stop Selling Binge Drinking Games

by Bend Weekly News Sources

It didn't take long for Kohl's Department Stores to respond to complaints by Oregon Partnership about the sale and promotion of drinking games. "Be assured that the remaining games are being removed from all Kohl's stores and online," said Kohl's spokeswoman Julie Landro in a call and e-mail to Oregon Partnership President/CEO Judy Cushing. This past week, Oregon Partnership, a statewide non-profit organization providing Alcohol and drug prevention education and treatment referral, asked that Kohl's pull the drinking game products from its stores. "We're delighted that Kohl's took this responsible action, and we thank them," said Cushing. "These games have no place in the gift section of a department store that caters to families." During the current holiday season, Kohl's, the national department store chain with more than 800 locations nationwide "including Portland" was promoting high-risk drinking by selling drinking games involving darts, roulette, and ping-pong. Other chains "including Linens n Things and Urban Outfitters" are selling similar Drinking games. Oregon Partnership has written letters to these companies and will continue to fight to make sure retailers understand they should stop selling such appalling products. "These are products that should not be sold by responsible retailers," said Pam Erickson, Oregon Partnership deputy director. "Intentionally or not, they encourage binge drinking." Such games as "Shots and Ladders Game Set" and "Keg Pong" are prominently displayed on Linen n Things store shelves, while "1000 Drinking Games" and "Outrageous Drinking Games" can be found at Urban Outfitters. According to the Urban Outfitters website, their stores "create an emotional bond with the 18-30 year old target customer," yet they are selling products promoting alcohol use to a customer base, a portion of which is underage. Erickson points out that December has been declared Drinking and Drugged Driving Awareness Month. "So what good does this do if we cannot get the cooperation of our citizens and business communities in halting practices that encourage people to abuse alcohol and run the risk of alcohol poisoning." This past fall, Oregon Partnership was successful in convincing Macy's and Bloomingdales department stores to stop selling t-shirts promoting drinking. The shirts had been sold in the stores' "back-to-school" sections. "Once Federated Department Stores heard our explanation that the product encouraged underage drinking, they pulled the shirts right away from all their stores nationwide" added Erickson.

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