



ADVOCATES  
FOR HIGHWAY  
& AUTO SAFETY

October 31, 2023

The Honorable Van H. Wanggaard, Chair  
The Honorable André Jacque, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Judiciary & Public Safety  
Wisconsin Legislature  
2 East Main Street  
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Chair Wanggaard and Vice Chair Jacque:

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates), an alliance of consumer, safety, medical, public health and law enforcement groups, and insurance companies working together to pass highway and auto safety laws that prevent crashes, save lives, reduce injuries, and contain costs, supports Senate Bill (SB) 150 to incentivize the use of ignition interlock devices (IIDs). We thank Vice Chair Jacque for your leadership on this issue and urge you to consider expanding the IID requirement in the legislation to all first-time offenders.

SB 150 includes several provisions that will encourage the use of IIDs. However, the improvement is limited to the context of current law which mandates IIDs for all repeat Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) offenders, all first time OWI offenders with a blood alcohol concentration of 0.15 percent or higher, and all drivers who refuse to provide a breath or blood sample for testing at a traffic stop. Given the seriousness of drunk driving and the effectiveness of IIDs in preventing drunk driving -- while still allowing an offender to drive when not impaired -- adding first-time offenders with a BAC between .08 and .15 percent is a sensible way to save lives.

Drunk driving is a deadly and costly threat to Wisconsin families. In 2021, 199 people were needlessly killed in drunk driving crashes on Wisconsin roads according to the most recent data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).<sup>i</sup> This accounted for 32 percent of all Wisconsin traffic fatalities that year.<sup>ii</sup> Moreover, motor vehicle crashes result in nearly \$6.3 billion each year in economic costs for Wisconsin.<sup>iii</sup> Clearly, this is a serious issue on Wisconsin roads which requires urgent attention and the effective solution of an improved IID law.

Data from Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) show that from 2006-2020 IIDs prevented 357,946 attempts to drive drunk in the Badger State, including 28,281 attempts in 2020.<sup>iv</sup> In addition to the provisions already in SB 150, expanding the IID requirement to all first-time offenders would improve the effectiveness of the IID program and help prevent drunk driving.

A common misconception is that most people who are convicted of their first drunk driving offense are social drinkers who made one mistake. However, studies show that the average first offender will have driven drunk 87 times before getting arrested.<sup>v</sup> According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), adult drivers admitted they drank too much and got behind the wheel approximately 127 million times in 2020, which equals over 347,000 incidents of drinking and driving each day.<sup>vi</sup> However, only about 1 million, or approximately one percent of those 127 million episodes results in an arrest for driving under the influence that year.<sup>vii</sup> Drivers with a BAC of .08 percent or higher involved

in fatal crashes were four times more likely to have a prior conviction for driving while impaired (DWI) than drivers with no alcohol.<sup>viii</sup>

States that have adopted IID laws for all offenders are saving lives, reducing injuries and preventing drunk driving recidivism. For example, Arizona, Oregon, New Mexico and Louisiana have experienced dramatic decreases of more than 30 percent in drunk driving deaths after enacting an all-offender IID law according to MADD. In addition, when West Virginia adopted its IID program, recidivism was reduced by 77 percent among first time offenders.<sup>ix</sup>

In 2021, an average of one alcohol impaired driving fatality occurred every 39 minutes in the U.S. resulting in a total of 13,384 deaths.<sup>x</sup> According to MADD, one in three people will be involved in a drunk driving crash in their lifetime. These tragic, preventable crashes also create a financial burden of \$58 billion in economic costs (in 2019).<sup>xi</sup>

There is overwhelming support, as high as 88 percent in polling, among Americans for requiring ignition interlocks for all convicted DUI offenders, even if it's their first conviction.<sup>xii</sup> Eighty-two (82) percent of offenders themselves believe the IID was effective in preventing them from driving after drinking.<sup>xiii</sup>

Unfortunately, after a large decrease in prior years, alcohol related deaths have risen 35 percent in the United States since 2014.<sup>xiv</sup> Action must be taken to bring these numbers down. Advocates urges you to support and advance SB 150 to promote IIDs but also urges you to expand the IID mandate to all first-time offenders. IIDs are a proven lifesaving technology that should be deployed to prevent all offenders from driving drunk. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Catherine Chase  
President

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<sup>i</sup> National Center for Statistics and Analysis. (2023, June). Alcohol-impaired driving: 2021 data (Traffic Safety Facts. Report No. DOT HS 813 450). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iii</sup> Blincoe, L., Miller, T., Wang, J.-S., Swedler, D., Coughlin, T., Lawrence, B., Guo, F., Klauer, S., & Dingus, T. (2023, February). *The economic and societal impact of motor vehicle crashes, 2019 (Revised)* (Report No. DOT HS 813 403). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

<sup>iv</sup> *Ignition Interlock Report: Putting an End to Drinking and Driving Attempts*. (2022, January). Mothers Against Drunk Driving, report available at <https://madd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2021-Ignition-Interlock-Report-FINAL-COPY.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> Drinking and Driving Trips, Stops by the Police, and Arrests: Analyses of the 1995 Survey of Drinking and Driving Attitudes and Behavior, NHTSA, Dec. 2000, DOT HS 809 184, available at [https://rosap.nhtl.bts.gov/view/dot/1779/dot\\_1779\\_DS1.pdf?](https://rosap.nhtl.bts.gov/view/dot/1779/dot_1779_DS1.pdf?)

<sup>vi</sup> CDC Impaired Driving: Get the Facts, Sept. 20, 2023, available at [https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/impaired\\_driving/impaired-drv\\_factsheet.html](https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/impaired_driving/impaired-drv_factsheet.html).

<sup>vii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>viii</sup> Traffic Safety Facts, 2021 Data: Alcohol-Impaired Driving, NHTSA DOT HS 813 450, June 2023, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813450>.

<sup>ix</sup> Tippetts, A. Scott and Robert Voas. *The Effectiveness of the West Virginia Interlock Program*. Journal of Traffic Medicine 26 (1-2) (1998): 19-24.

<sup>x</sup> Traffic Safety Facts, 2021 Data: Alcohol-Impaired Driving, NHTSA DOT HS 813 450, June 2023, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813450>.

<sup>xi</sup> Blincoe, L., Miller, T., Wang, J.-S., Swedler, D., Coughlin, T., Lawrence, B., Guo, F., Klauer, S., & Dingus, T. (2023, February). *The economic and societal impact of motor vehicle crashes, 2019 (Revised)* (Report No. DOT HS 813 403). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

<sup>xii</sup> MADD, How Technology Has Stopped 1.77 Million Drunk Drivers: A State by State Guide to Creating a Future of No More Victims, February 10, 2016; available at <https://online.flippingbook.com/view/57396/4/>.

<sup>xiii</sup> Morse, BJ and DS Elliott. Hamilton County Drinking and Driving Study: 30 Month Report. Boulder, Colorado: University of Colorado, 1990.

<sup>xiv</sup> Facts + Statistics: Alcohol-impaired driving, Insurance Information Institute, available at <https://www.iii.org/fact-statistic/facts-statistics-alcohol-impaired-driving>.