



ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY

December 11, 2023

The Honorable Nick DiCeglie, Chair
The Honorable Tracie Davis, Vice Chair
Committee on Transportation
Florida State Senate
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Chair DiCeglie and Vice Chair Davis:

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) 260 to require ignition interlock devices (IIDs) during the license suspension period for suspected drunk drivers who refuse a breath test.

Drunk driving is a deadly and costly threat to Florida families. In 2021, 1,019 people were needlessly killed in drunk driving crashes on Florida roads according to the most recent data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). This accounted for 27 percent of all Florida traffic fatalities that year. Moreover, Florida incurred \$20 billion in economic harm, which is equivalent to \$932 per resident, due to motor vehicle crashes according to a 2019 analysis. Clearly, this is a serious issue on Florida roads which requires urgent attention and the effective solution of IIDs to prevent suspected drunk drivers who refuse a breath test from driving drunk while their license is suspended.

Data from Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) show that from 2006-2020, IIDs prevented 109,127 attempts to drive drunk in the Sunshine State, including 11,809 attempts in 2020 alone.ⁱ In Florida, the driving under the influence (DUI) breath test refusal rate is 35 percent,ⁱⁱ which is significantly higher than the national average of 24 percent.ⁱⁱⁱ Florida currently suspends the licenses of drivers who refuse a breath test, but many people continue to drive despite their driving privileges being suspended. Requiring use of IIDs for refusals, as SB 260 accomplishes, will improve the effectiveness of Florida's 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.^{iv} 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.^v However, only about 1 million, or approximately one percent of those 127 million episodes resulted in an arrest for driving under the influence that year.^{vi} 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.^{vii}

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.^{viii} 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).^{ix} This must end and especially when proven solutions are available. Expanding the use of IIDs to prevent drunk driving is one such answer. Offenders themselves attest to their usefulness - 82 percent believe the IID was effective in preventing them from driving after drinking.^x

Advocates urges you to support and advance SB 260 to better utilize the lifesaving technology of IIDs to curb drunk driving. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Catherine Chase
President

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- ⁱ *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>
- ⁱⁱ Bill Analysis and Fiscal Impact Statement, Florida Senate, available at <https://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2023/296/Analyses/2023s00296.pre.tr.PDF>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility, BAC Test Refusal Penalties, (2016), available at <https://www.responsibility.org/wpcontent/uploads/2015/03/BAC-Test-Refusal-Penalties-2016-2.pdf>.
- ^{iv} 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.
- ^v CDC Impaired Driving: Get the Facts, Sept. 20, 2023, available at https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/impaired_driving/impaired-driv_factsheet.html.
- ^{vi} *Ibid.*
- ^{vii} 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>.
- ^{viii} 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>.
- ^{ix} 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.
- ^x Morse, BJ and DS Elliott. Hamilton County Drinking and Driving Study: 30 Month Report. Boulder, Colorado: University of Colorado, 1990.