



ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY

April 10, 2024

The Honorable Kevin McCarty, Chair
The Honorable Juan Alanis, Vice Chair
Assembly Committee on Public Safety
California State Legislature
1020 N Street, Room 111
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Chair McCarty and Vice Chair Alanis:

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 Assembly Bill (AB) 2210 to require ignition interlock devices (IID) for all first time convicted drunk drivers. We urge you to advance this measure and join the 35 states and Washington, DC that have made their roads safer by enacting an all offender IID law.

Under current law courts *may* order IIDs for first time offenders but IIDs are not required, except for injury related crashes and repeat offenders. AB 2210 would close this dangerous gap in California's IID law. Information from Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) on the effectiveness of IIDs in California notes that over the past 16 years, IIDs prevented 347,604 attempts to drive drunk which equates to nearly 22,000 per year.ⁱ Expanding the law to include all first time offenders would improve the effectiveness of the IID program and help prevent drunk driving.

Drunk driving is a deadly, costly, and growing threat to California families. Drunk driving deaths in the state have increased 65 percent over the ten-year period, 2012-2021, and in 2021, 1,370 people were needlessly killed in drunk driving crashes on California roads according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).ⁱⁱ This accounted for 32 percent of all California traffic fatalities that year.ⁱⁱⁱ In addition, the Golden State incurred \$29.1 billion in economic harm, which is equivalent to a "crash tax" of \$736 per resident each year due to motor vehicle crashes according to a 2019 analysis.^{iv} Clearly, this is a serious issue which requires urgent attention and the effective solution of an all offender IID law.

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.^v 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.^{vi} 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.^{vii} Drivers with a BAC of .08 percent or higher involved in fatal crashes were four times more likely to have a prior conviction for drunk driving than drivers with no alcohol.^{viii}

States that have adopted IID laws for all offenders are saving lives, reducing injuries, and preventing drunk driving recidivism. Some states, including neighboring states Oregon and Arizona, 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.^{ix}

In 2022, an average of one alcohol impaired driving fatality occurred every 39 minutes in the U.S. resulting in a total of 13,524 deaths.^x

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 is their first conviction.^{xi} Eighty-two (82) percent of offenders themselves believe the IID was effective in preventing them from driving after drinking.^{xii}

Unfortunately, after a large decrease in prior years, alcohol related driving deaths have risen 36 percent in the United States since 2014.^{xiii} ^{xiv} Action must be taken to bring these numbers down. Advocates urges you to support and advance AB 2210 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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- 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 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. Available at: <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813450>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*
- ^{iv} 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.
- ^v 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.nhtsa.gov/view/dot/1779/dot_1779_DS1.pdf.
- ^{vi} CDC Impaired Driving: Get the Facts, Sept. 20, 2023, available at https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/impaired_driving/impaired_drv_factsheet.html.
- ^{vii} *Ibid.*
- ^{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} Tippetts, A. Scott and Robert Voas. *The Effectiveness of the West Virginia Interlock Program*. Journal of Traffic Medicine 26 (1-2) (1998): 19-24.
- ^x Overview of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2022, NHTSA DOT HS 813 560, April 2024, available at: <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813560>.
- ^{xi} 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/>.
- ^{xii} Morse, BJ and DS Elliott. Hamilton County Drinking and Driving Study: 30 Month Report. Boulder, Colorado: University of Colorado, 1990.
- ^{xiii} 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>.
- ^{xiv} Overview of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2022, NHTSA DOT HS 813 560, April 2024, available at: <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813560>.