



ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY

May 19, 2025

The Honorable Buffy Wicks, Chair
The Honorable Kate Sanchez, Vice Chair
Assembly Committee on Appropriations
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Chair Wicks and Vice Chair Sanchez:

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 advancing Assembly Bill (AB) 366 to make permanent the ignition interlock device (IID) pilot program and upgrade the law to require the use of IIDs by all convicted drunk drivers, including first time offenders. We urge you to advance this measure to prevent the IID program from expiring at the end of 2025 and join the large majority of states and Washington, DC which have made their streets and highways safer by enacting an all-offender IID law.

Drunk driving is a deadly and costly threat to California families. In 2023, 1,355 people were needlessly killed in drunk driving crashes on California roads according to the most recent data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).ⁱ This is a 40 percent increase in drunk driving fatalities compared to 2019 and accounted for 33 percent of all traffic fatalities that year.ⁱⁱ The Golden State has the second most drunk driving fatalities of any state.ⁱⁱⁱ Moreover, traffic fatalities cost the state \$29.1 billion each year equating to a per resident “crash tax” of \$736 according to a 2019 analysis.^{iv} When updated for inflation alone, in 2025, costs would equate to \$36.7 billion and \$929 respectively.^v Clearly, this is a serious issue on California roads which requires urgent attention and the effective solution of an all-offender IID law.

Under current law, a court may require an IID for a first-time offender. Information from Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) on the effectiveness of IIDs notes that IIDs prevented over 28,000 attempts to drive drunk in California in 2020 alone.^{vi} Expanding the law to include 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.^{vii} 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.^{viii} However, only 1 million, or approximately one percent of that 127 million, were arrested for driving under the influence that year.^{ix} Drivers with a BAC of .08 or higher involved in fatal crashes were three times more likely to have a prior conviction for drunk driving than drivers with no alcohol.^x

States that have adopted IID laws for all offenders are saving lives, reducing injuries and preventing drunk driving recidivism. For example, when West Virginia adopted its IID program, recidivism was reduced by 77 percent among first time offenders.^{xi}

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.^{xii} These tragic, preventable crashes also create a national financial burden of \$69 billion in economic costs in 2019.^{xiii} When updated for inflation only that equates to \$87.1 billion in 2025 dollars.^{xiv}

The American public strongly agrees that the use of IIDs is needed to address this public health crisis. Polling shows 69 percent to 88 percent of Americans support requiring ignition interlocks for all convicted DUI offenders, even if it's their first conviction.^{xv} Furthermore, 82 percent of offenders themselves believe the IID was effective in preventing them from driving after drinking.^{xvi}

Advocates urges you to support and advance AB 366 to require this commonsense, lifesaving law to curb drunk driving. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Catherine Chase
President

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- i State Traffic Safety Information for California, NHTSA, available at <https://cdan.dot.gov/STSI/stsi.htm>.
- ii State Traffic Safety Information for California, NHTSA, available at <https://cdan.dot.gov/STSI/stsi.htm>.
- iii Traffic Safety Facts, 2022 Data: Alcohol-Impaired Driving, NHTSA DOT HS 813 578, Aug. 2024 (revised), available at: <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813578>.
- iv The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019, NHTSA, Feb. 2023, DOT HS 813 403, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403>.
- v CPI Inflation Calculator, BLS, Jan. 2019 to Jan. 2025, available at <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>.
- vi Ignition Interlock Report, Putting an End to Drinking and Driving Attempts, MADD, January 2022; available at <https://madd.org/wpcontent/uploads/2023/01/2021-Ignition-Interlock-Report-FINAL-COPY.pdf>.
- vii 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.
- viii CDC Impaired Driving Facts, Accessed Oct. 3, 2024, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/impaired-driving/facts/>.
- ix CDC Impaired Driving Facts, Accessed Oct. 3, 2024, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/impaired-driving/facts/>.
- x Traffic Safety Facts, 2022 Data: Alcohol-Impaired Driving, NHTSA DOT HS 813 578, Aug. 2024 (revised), available at: <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813578>.
- xi Tippetts, A. Scott and Robert Voas. *The Effectiveness of the West Virginia Interlock Program*. Journal of Traffic Medicine 26 (1-2) (1998): 19-24.
- xii Traffic Safety Facts, 2022 Data: Alcohol-Impaired Driving, NHTSA DOT HS 813 578, Aug. 2024 (revised), available at: <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813578>.
- xiii The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019, NHTSA, Feb. 2023, DOT HS 813 403, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403>.
- xiv CPI Inflation Calculator, BLS, Jan. 2019 to Jan. 2025, available at <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>.
- xv 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/>.
- xvi Morse, BJ and DS Elliott. Hamilton County Drinking and Driving Study: 30 Month Report. Boulder, Colorado: University of Colorado, 1990.