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March 31, 2026

The Honorable Abigail Spanberger
Governor of Virginia
State Capitol
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Governor Spanberger,

Thank you for your leadership in increasing traffic safety in Virginia. On behalf of our organizations, we are proud to support HB 561, to modernize DUI penalties, increase public safety, and recognize realities of life without a license. We urge you to sign this lifesaving legislation into law.

HB 561 expands the mandated usage of VASAP and interlock ignition devices (IID) and empowers judges to require VASAP and IID usage with a restricted driver's license rather than simply mandating hard license suspension periods for certain pre-conviction and post-conviction drivers.

The hard driver's license revocation period is the waiting period that a person must complete before being allowed to install an IID. It is an outdated and ineffective penalty that most offenders disregard. Importantly, federal law no longer requires hard license suspensions or revocation periods. Instead, allowing people to obtain an IID restricted license for the duration of a person's license suspension is a best practice that increases safety on the roads and makes IIDs more effective, according to Mothers Against Drunk Driving ([MADD](#)), the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators ([AAMVA](#)), and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration ([NHTSA](#)). According to AAMVA's Reducing Suspended Drivers and Alternative Reinstatement Best Practices [Edition 3](#):

- Over 75% of suspended or revoked drivers continue to drive.
- About 34% of drivers suspended for highway safety reasons commit moving violations while suspended, versus about 17% of those suspended for non-highway safety reasons.

- Approximately one in five traffic fatalities in the U.S. involve a driver who is suspended or who has no license at all, according to the Transportation Research Board of the National Academies.
- Reducing law enforcement encounters with suspended drivers allows an increase in availability to respond to service calls and other proactive highway safety activities.

As noted in NHTSA's IID policy [toolkit](#), "Ignition interlocks permit offenders to retain or regain legal driving status, thus enabling them to maintain employment and manage familial and court-ordered responsibilities that require driving. This is a particularly relevant benefit, as many offenders without interlocks drive illegally on a suspended/revoked license, often after drinking. The installation of an interlock on the offender's vehicle reduces the probability of this occurring, thereby improving public safety."

An evaluation of Ontario's law found that a reduced suspension program increased installation rates from 45 to 70 percent among eligible first-time offenders (Ma et al., [2016](#)).

In its model IID legislation, MADD states the following: "There is no need for a hard license suspension period following a drunk driving arrest. The sooner a drunk driver is on an interlock device the better as up to 75 percent of drunk drivers drive illegally on a suspended license."

HB 561 also allows judges to require IIDs for people under 21 years of age who are convicted of first and second offense DUI (18.2-266.1 and 18.270.1). Studies show that early intervention, education through VASAP, and use of IIDs can curb behavior in young people and adults and help reinforce safer driving.

As you know, IIDs are a critical part of Virginia's impaired driving laws. According to the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles [data](#), in 2024, there were 6,767 reported alcohol-related crashes, 318 alcohol-impaired driving deaths, and 4,306 injuries. NHTSA research shows IIDs reduce recidivism by up to 70 percent while installed.

To date in Virginia, IIDs have prevented people from drinking and driving more than 368,000 times since 2006, including 40,971 times when a driver was above the legal BAC limit of .08, according to MADD.

HB 561 will increase protection for roadway users while allowing people with DWI convictions to safely continue driving and meeting family and work obligations. We urge you to sign HB 561 into law to further reduce crashes and injuries and save lives in Virginia.

Sincerely,

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