



ADVOCATES  
FOR HIGHWAY  
& AUTO SAFETY

May 4, 2026

The Honorable Jeremy Cooney, Chair  
The Honorable Peter Oberacker, Ranking Member  
Senate Transportation Committee  
New York State Senate  
Legislative Office Building  
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Chair Cooney and Ranking Member Oberacker:

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 Senate Bill (S.) 2517/Assembly Bill (A.) 2703 to upgrade the ignition interlock device (IID) law to require IID use by convicted Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) offenders as a condition of license reinstatement and close a loophole in current law to curb drunk driving. This safety upgrade is critical and timely.

Drunk driving is a deadly and costly threat to New York families. In 2024, 300 people were needlessly killed in drunk driving crashes in New York, accounting for 27 percent of traffic fatalities, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).<sup>1</sup> Tragic, preventable crashes also created a national financial burden of \$69 billion in economic costs in 2019.<sup>2</sup> When updated for inflation only, that equates to \$89.2 billion in 2026 dollars.<sup>3</sup> Clearly, this is a serious issue which requires urgent attention and the effective solution of increasing IID utilization.

While New York mandates IID use for all DWI offenders as a condition of probation or conditional discharge, the IID mandate can be evaded by waiting out the term or by exploiting the “good cause” exception for people who do not own a vehicle by transferring a vehicle prior to sentencing. A. 2703/S. 2517 remedies these problems by requiring regular use of an IID for at least six months, on all vehicles owned or operated by the offender, as a condition for license reinstatement and by narrowing the “good cause” exception to prevent abuse. Information from Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) on the effectiveness of IIDs notes that IIDs prevented 6,477 attempts to drive drunk in New York in 2024 alone and 141,215 attempts from 2006 to 2024. Research shows that IIDs reduce recidivism with decreases in subsequent arrests ranging from 50 to 90 percent while the IID is installed on the vehicle.<sup>4</sup> These reforms 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>5</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>6</sup> However, only 1 million, or approximately one percent of that 127 million, were arrested for driving under the influence that year.<sup>7</sup> Drivers with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 percent or higher involved in fatal crashes were three times more likely to have a prior conviction for drunk driving than drivers with no alcohol.<sup>8</sup>

The American public strongly agrees that the use of IIDs is needed to address this public health crisis. Polling shows 69 to 88 percent of Americans support requiring ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk driving offenders, even if it's their first conviction.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, 82 percent of drunk driving offenders themselves believe the IID was effective in preventing them from driving after drinking.<sup>10</sup>

In 2024, an average of one alcohol impaired driving fatality occurred every 44 minutes in the U.S. resulting in a total of 11,904 deaths.<sup>11</sup> These can and must be stopped. Advocates urges you to support

and advance S. 2517/A. 2703 to make these necessary reforms to increase use of this commonsense, lifesaving technology to curb drunk driving.

Sincerely,



Catherine Chase  
President

cc: Senate Transportation Committee members

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- <sup>1</sup> State Traffic Safety Information for New York, NHTSA, available at <https://cdan.dot.gov/STSI/stsi.htm>.
  - <sup>2</sup> 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>.
  - <sup>3</sup> CPI Inflation Calculator, BLS, Jan. 2019 to Jan. 2026, available at <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>.
  - <sup>4</sup> Ignition Interlocks – What You Need to Know: A Toolkit for Policymakers, Highway Safety Professionals, and Advocates Second Edition (updated November 2019), NHTSA, Nov. 2019, DOT HS 811 883, available [here](#).
  - <sup>5</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.nhtsa.gov/view/dot/1779/dot\\_1779\\_DS1.pdf](https://rosap.nhtsa.gov/view/dot/1779/dot_1779_DS1.pdf).
  - <sup>6</sup> CDC Impaired Driving Facts, Accessed Oct. 3, 2024, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/impaired-driving/facts/>.
  - <sup>7</sup> CDC Impaired Driving Facts, Accessed Oct. 3, 2024, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/impaired-driving/facts/>.
  - <sup>8</sup> 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>.
  - <sup>9</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>10</sup> Morse, BJ and DS Elliott. Hamilton County Drinking and Driving Study: 30 Month Report. Boulder, Colorado: University of Colorado, 1990.
  - <sup>11</sup> Overview of Motor Vehicle Crashes in 2024, NHTSA DOT HS 813 791, April 2026, available [here](#).