



December 13, 2011

The Honorable Rich Zipperer  
Chairman, Senate Committee on Judiciary, Utilities, Commerce, and Government Operations  
Room 323 South  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 7882  
Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7882

Dear Chairman Zipperer,

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) respectfully requests your support and a vote on Senate Bill 320 in the Senate Committee on Judiciary, Utilities, Commerce, and Government Operations. This lifesaving legislation expands Wisconsin's ignition interlock law to include all convicted drunk drivers, including first time offenders with an illegal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or greater. MADD supports SB 320 as the measure will help stop drunk driving, save lives and prevent injuries.

Drunk driving is a 100 percent preventable crime. In 2010, 205 people were killed in crashes involving a drunk driver in Wisconsin—36 percent of all total traffic fatalities in the state. In addition, over 33,166 people in Wisconsin have three or more drunk driving convictions, and 5,042 people have five or more convictions.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers saves lives and are effective in reducing drunk driving recidivism by 67 percent.

An ignition interlock is a breath test device linked to a vehicle's ignition system. When a convicted drunk driver wishes to start his or her vehicle, he or she must first blow into the device. The vehicle will not start unless the driver's BAC is below a preset level.

As a result of Act 100 effective July 1, 2010, ignition interlocks are required for repeat offenders, first time offenders with a BAC of .15 or greater and for those who refuse to submit to a breath test. Prior to the implementation Act 100, only 1,195 interlocks were installed in Wisconsin. As of July 2011, 7,824 interlocks have been installed.

Currently, 15 states—including Illinois—require ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers, including first-time offenders. In New Mexico, the first state to require these devices for all convicted offenders, drunk driving re-arrests are down statewide by 37 percent, alcohol-involved crashes are down by 31 percent, alcohol-related injuries are down by 41 percent and alcohol-related fatalities are down by 36 percent. Due to all-offender interlock laws in Arizona and Oregon, there has been a 51 and 52 percent reduction in drunk driving related deaths respectively.

A more effective approach is necessary to stop drunk driving beginning on the first conviction. "First-time" offenders are not really first time drunk drivers. Conservatively, a first-

time convicted OWI offender has driven drunk at least 80 times prior to being arrested. Additionally, SB 320 is needed in Wisconsin as on average 40 percent of first time offenders are convicted again. SB 320 would protect the public by reducing the number of repeat offenders on Wisconsin roadways.

MADD strongly supports this legislation because 50 to 75 percent of convicted drunk drivers continue to drive without a license. Taking away the license of a convicted drunk driver is not the most effective way to rehabilitate the offender and is not effective in protecting the public.

MADD believes license revocation or suspension alone is not as effective in protecting the public as requiring an ignition interlock following a DUI conviction. Under SB 320, the public is protected and offenders are taught to drive sober by being required to operate a vehicle equipped with an interlock. The offender can continue to drive where needed with an ignition interlock notated driver's license. They simply cannot drive drunk and hurt or kill innocent people in Wisconsin.

Reducing costs to the state is critical in today's economy. Besides saving lives, this legislation will also save taxpayers money. A study of New Mexico's interlock law found the cost of an interlock was \$2.25 a day for the user, but for every dollar invested in an interlock for a first-time convicted DUI offender, the public saves three dollars.

SB 320 will help stop drunk driving will reduce repeat offenses among first-time offenders convicted of driving with an illegal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or greater. I urge you not to be deceived by the "one sip over the limit" myth. Anything over .08 BAC is illegal, but don't be confused about what .08 is. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism notes that to reach a .08 BAC, men must typically consume five or more drinks, and women must typically consume four or more drinks, in about two hours.

MADD urges your support and vote on SB 320 in the Senate Committee on Judiciary, Utilities, Commerce, and Government Operations. This measure is an effective and fair approach that can reduce the number of repeat drunk driving offenders, save lives, prevent injuries and reduce costs to the state of Wisconsin. Enclosed is additional information on ignition interlocks.

Sincerely,



John Vose  
Volunteer Public Policy Liaison  
MADD Wisconsin

Enclosures

Cc: Members of Wisconsin State Legislature (Email Copy)



## Ignition Interlock Fact Sheet

- An ignition interlock is a breath test device linked to a vehicle's ignition system. When a convicted drunk driver wishes to start his or her vehicle, he or she must first blow into the device. The vehicle will not start unless the driver's Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) is below a preset level.
- In 2010 in Wisconsin, 205 people were killed in crashes involving a drunk driver representing 36 percent of all traffic fatalities. (NHTSA) <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811554.pdf>
- There are 33,116 people with three or more drunk driving conviction convictions and 5,042 with five or more convictions in Wisconsin.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), interlocks are effective in saving lives and reducing drunk driving recidivism by 67 percent. (CDC) [http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2011/p0222\\_ignitioninterlocks.html](http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2011/p0222_ignitioninterlocks.html)
- In Wisconsin, a majority of drunk driving deaths and injuries are caused by drunk driving offenders with no prior convictions. (Wisconsin DOT) <http://www.dot.state.wi.us/safety/motorist/crashfacts/docs/alcohol-section6.pdf>
- Approximately 40 percent of first time convicted drunk drivers are convicted again for drunk driving. (Wisconsin DOT data from 2000 to 2007)
- 50 to 75 percent of convicted drunk drivers continue to drive on a suspended license. (Peck, et al, 1995 and Beck et al, 1999)
- Ignition interlocks are required for repeat and first time offenders with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .15 or greater in Wisconsin. MADD would like to see these devices required for all convicted drunk drivers with an illegal BAC of .08 or greater
- **Public Supports Interlocks for First-Time Convicted Drunk Drivers.**
  - **88 percent support** interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers. (Center for Excellence in Rural Safety at the University of Minnesota, May 2010)
  - **84 percent support** ignition interlocks for convicted drunk drivers. (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety 2009 Survey)
  - **88 percent support** requiring drivers who have been convicted of DWI to use a device that won't let their car start if they have been drinking. (AAA 2009 Survey)
- Ignition interlocks for convicted drunk drivers *save* taxpayers money. The DUI offender pays for the installation and monitoring of the interlock. A study of New Mexico's interlock law found the cost of an interlock was \$2.25 a day for the user, but for every dollar invested in an interlock for a first-time offender the public saves three dollars. (Impact DWI, PIRE study in Traffic Injury Prevention, 2007)
- 15 states and a California pilot program (covering a population of over 13 million) have laws requiring ignition interlocks for all first-time convicted drunk drivers.
- Conservative estimates show DWI offenders have driven drunk at least 80 times before they are arrested. (CDC "Vital Signs: Alcohol-Impaired Driving Among Adults — United States, 2010." <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6039a4.htm>)
- Government does *not* bear the cost of the interlock device—the devices are paid for by the convicted drunk driver.

For more information on ignition interlocks, please visit [www.madd.org/interlock](http://www.madd.org/interlock)