



# **CAMPAIGN TO ELIMINATE DRUNK DRIVING**

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Before the Assembly Committee on Urban and Local Affairs  
In Support of Assembly Bill 66  
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## **Introduction**

Thank you Chairwoman Berceau and members of the committee for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to submit written testimony to you today in support of Assembly Bill 66 relating to drink special bans.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving applauds Representative Josh Zepnick for his leadership and continuing steadfast efforts to prevent drunk driving as demonstrated with the introduction of Assembly Bill 66. MADD would also like to recognize Representative Zepnick, yourself Chairwoman Berceau, Representative Hintz for the co-sponsorship of AB 283. Among other provisions, AB 283 requires ignition interlocks for first time convicted OWI offenders with BAC .15 or greater. AB 283 is an important step forward to switching the focus of merely refining OWI laws for repeat offenders to advancing actual reform with more effective penalties for first time convicted drunk drivers. MADD stands by the assertion that for sustainable and lasting reform to occur, legislative efforts must include all first time convicted drunk drivers and measures that prevent the violent crime of drunk driving.

Wisconsin is known for weak and ineffective laws relating to drunk driving. Some claim this is a reflection of the state's "culture." Sadly, Wisconsin's weak OWI laws have aided to pave the way for death and destruction on Wisconsin roadways. From 1998 to 2008, 3,196 people were killed in drunk driving related crashes in Wisconsin.<sup>i,ii</sup> In the last decade, over 67,500 people were injured in alcohol related crashes in Wisconsin.<sup>iii</sup> MADD believes a decade of nearly 3,200 drunk driving deaths and over 67,500 injuries does not reflect the culture of Wisconsin.

### **Drink Special Ban should be Considered to Prevent Drunk Driving**

MADD has no problem and is not against the responsible consumption of alcohol for those over the legal drinking age of 21. However, binge drinking (consuming 5 drinks in a row for men, 4 in a row for women<sup>iv</sup>) can be dangerous as it increases chances of drunk driving. Therefore MADD supports exploring possible preventative measures such as AB 66 which may help control or limit the all you can drink binge drinking free for alls that can bring deadly results.

It stands as no surprise that the high rate of drunk driving related deaths in Wisconsin is matched by an above average excessive rate of binge drinking. In fact, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) estimates that Wisconsin has a serious problem with binge drinking.<sup>v</sup> In a SAMHSA study of monthly binge alcohol use in 2007, Wisconsin ranked above the National Average:

**Table B.10 Binge Alcohol Use in Past Month, by Age Group and State: Percentages, Annual Averages Based on 2006 and 2007 NSDUHs**

<b>State</b>	<b>12+ (Estimate)</b>	<b>12 to 17 (Estimate)</b>	<b>18-25 (Estimate)</b>	<b>26+ (Estimate)</b>
Total U.S. Average	23.15%	10%	41.99%	21.65%
<b>Wisconsin</b>	<b>28.84%</b>	<b>12.29%</b>	<b>53.29%</b>	<b>26.76%</b>

Source: SAMHSA

There is a correlation with Wisconsin high binge drinking rates and drunk driving deaths in Wisconsin. Banning or controlling drink specials may help prevent the violent crime of drunk driving or at the very least reduce the public health threat of binge drinking in Wisconsin.

For informational purposes, I am submitting for the record a report published by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration entitled “Preventing Over-consumption of Alcohol – Sales to the Intoxicated and “Happy Hour” (Drink Special) Laws.” According to the report, as of 2005 there were 27 States possessing laws that specifically prohibit happy hours, drink specials and other practices that encourage drinking to intoxication.<sup>vi</sup>

In conclusion, MADD urges the Committee on Local and Urban Affairs to support Assembly Bill 66. This legislation has the possibility to help prevent the violent crime of drunk driving and reduce other public health threats associated with the over consumption of alcohol.

Thank you.

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<sup>i</sup> NHTSA Query 2009. <http://www.madd.org/docs/Updated%201982-2007%20AR-DD%20Related%20Traffic%20Fatalities.pdf>.

<sup>ii</sup> National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. "2008 Traffic Safety Annual Assessment-Highlights" DOT 811 172. Washington DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, June 2009. <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811172.PDF>

<sup>iii</sup> Wisconsin DOT, 1998-2008.

<sup>iv</sup> Wechsler, Henry, et al. "Trends in College Binge Drinking During a Period of Increased Prevention Efforts." *Journal of American College Health*. 50, No. 5, (2002).

<sup>v</sup> SAMHSA Office of Applied Studies, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2006 and 2007, <http://oas.samhsa.gov/2k7/state/AppB.htm#TabB-10>

<sup>vi</sup> National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. "Preventing Over-Consumption of Alcohol – Sales to the Intoxicated and "Happy Hour" (Drink Special) Laws." DOT HS 809 878, November 2005.