



**INACTION ON PROVEN OWI REFORM MEASURES COSTLY IN MANY WAYS**  
*Submits Testimony In Support of Effective Anti Drunk Driving Techniques*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
September 10, 2009

**Please Contact:**  
Frank Harris, 202-974-2471

**MADISON, WI** – Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) submitted testimony to the Joint Review Committee on Criminal Penalties which is meeting to discuss fiscal effects and penalty structure of OWI policy items. The testimony covered the economic costs of drunk driving and urged support for effective OWI reform measures that will save lives and the state money.

“By far, Assembly Bill 283 is the most comprehensive OWI reform proposal in the legislature. The measure requires interlocks for first time convicted drunk drivers with a BAC of .15 or greater. Although, MADD favors ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers, AB 283 is a step in the right direction to save lives in Wisconsin,” said MADD State Policy Specialist Frank Harris.

Some argue that ignition interlocks for first time convicted drunk drivers is too harsh. However, studies show that a first time convicted drunk driver has driven drunk 87 times prior to being arrested. A study of New Mexico interlock program found the cost of an interlock was \$2.25 a day for the offender but for every dollar invested in an interlock the public saves three dollars.

MADD also outlined in the testimony the economic costs of drunk driving in Wisconsin from 1998 to 2008. In the last 10 years in Wisconsin:

- 3,196 drunk driving deaths costing the state and taxpayers at least \$3.5 billion.
- 67,588 injuries from alcohol related crashes costing the state and taxpayers \$3.2 billion.
- Alcohol related crashes accounted for an estimated 19% of Wisconsin’s auto insurance payments.

“Wisconsin’s drunk driving law has been revised in previous sessions but mainly relating to provisions for repeat offenders. To achieve OWI reform that not only saves lives but saves money, MADD believes there needs to be a focus on prevention and more effective penalties for the first time convicted drunk drivers. Otherwise, the state may face another decade of avoidable drunk driving deaths and injuries at rates well above the national average,” added Harris.

For more information, please visit: [www.madd.org/wi](http://www.madd.org/wi).

###