



Mothers Against Drunk Driving  
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October 30, 2009

The Honorable Mark Miller  
Senator, Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance  
317 East, State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53707

The Honorable Mark Pocan  
Representative, Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance  
309 East, State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Senator Miller and Representative Pocan,

With Senate Bill 66 requiring interlocks for convicted drunk drivers with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .15 or greater, Wisconsin is taking a step in the right direction toward requiring interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers. MADD supports Senate Bill 66 and the efforts displayed by Senate and Assembly Leadership in advancing drunk driving reform legislation. However, MADD believes this OWI reform package holds the possibility to be more comprehensive by requiring ignition interlocks for all first time convicted drunk drivers.

The most effective way for Wisconsin to cut down on drunk driving while saving lives and preventing injuries is by requiring ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers. Offenders should pay the full cost, \$2-3 per day, for the devices. This is already being done in 11 other states and the state of California which just passed a law requiring ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers in four counties, which will cover more than 14 million people.

MADD supports ignition interlocks because we know that over 75 percent of convicted drunk drivers will continue to drive even with a suspended license. We also know that it is important that offenders be able to keep employment and continue to be productive members of society and that for most people, driving is a necessity.

We know first-time offenders have driven drunk before—one particular study showed an average of 87 times before the first arrest.<sup>i</sup> This is a conservative estimate. In 2002, there were 159 impaired driving trips in the United States<sup>ii</sup>, yet only 1.5 million arrests for driving under the influence.<sup>iii</sup> That is one arrest for every 106 times of driving under the influence.<sup>iv</sup>

Nearly 300 studies have shown that drivers are significantly impaired at .08 BAC. Wisconsin has chosen to downplay the importance of the .08 BAC standard as first time convicted drunk drivers receives the same penalty as a traffic ticket. However, by requiring interlocks for all first time convicted drunk drivers with a BAC of .08 or greater, drunk driving offenses will be reduced in Wisconsin.

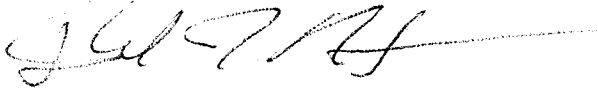
An average 170-pound man must have more than four drinks in one hour on an empty stomach to reach a .08 percent blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level. A 137-pound woman would reach .08 BAC after about three drinks in an hour on an empty stomach. A 120-pound woman would not reach a .08 after three drinks in an hour on an empty stomach- a level that exceeds what is commonly accepted as social drinking.<sup>v</sup>

The success of New Mexico has been largely cited in improving Wisconsin's interlock law. However, New Mexico requires interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers now, not just those first time offenders with a BAC of .15 or greater. In New Mexico, ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers has reduced impaired driving fatalities by 35 percent. For every dollar invested into ignition interlocks, the public saves three according to one study of New Mexico's interlock law.

Right now, interlocks for all OWI offenders are needed as taxpayers have paid \$6.7 billion since 1998 for drunk driving deaths and injuries in Wisconsin. Interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers hold the promise to sharply reduce the taxpayer subsidy that Wisconsin provides to drunk drivers.

Please consider amending SB 66 to require interlocks for all first time convicted drunk drivers with a BAC of .08 or greater. Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Frank Harris  
State Policy Specialist  
Mothers Against Drunk Driving

Cc: Members of the Wisconsin State Senate and State Assembly (Email)  
The Honorable Jim Doyle, Governor, State of Wisconsin (Email)

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<sup>i</sup> Zador, Paul, Sheila Krawchuk, and B. Moore (1997) "Drinking and Driving Trips, Stops by Police, and Arrests: Analysis of the 1995 National Survey of Drinking and Driving Attitudes and Behavior," Rockville, MD: Estat, Inc. 1997.

<sup>ii</sup> (Quinlan, Kyran P., et al. "Alcohol-Impaired Driving Among US Adults, 1993-2002." American Journal of Preventive Medicine 28 (4) (2005): 346-350.)

<sup>iii</sup> FBI, 2003

<sup>iv</sup> <http://www.roadcrewonline.org/files/researchpaper.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration, Report to Congress on Alcohol Limits, DOT HS 807 879, October 1992.