

May 14, 2019

MADD supports SB 198 – Improving the Drunk Driving Law

The Honorable Van Wanggaard
Chairman, Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee,

Dear Chairman Wanggaard and Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee Members,

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) strongly urges you to hold a hearing and executive session on lifesaving drunk driving reform SB 198 by Senator Jacque and Representative Thiesfeldt, which incentivizes first-time convicted drunk drivers to use an ignition interlock.

SB 198 allows first-time convicted drunk driving offenders with a BAC of .08 or greater to seek a partial expungement of their OWI record if they use an ignition interlock for six months. SB 198 is not weak on crime. It is a smart-on-justice measure that will help change behavior while preventing repeat OWI offenses.

In Wisconsin since 2010, interlocks are required for refusals, repeat offenders and first-time offenders with a blood alcohol concentration of .15 or greater. At least six states have laws in place similar to SB 198. **Over the past 12 years, interlocks have prevented over 300,000 attempts to drive drunk in Wisconsin.** MADD supports SB 198 because it will help prevent more OWI offenses while teaching sober driving behavior and giving drunk drivers a true second chance.

The CDC found that ignition interlocks reduce repeat OWI offenses by 67 percent compared to offenders who only had a license suspended. According to the Wisconsin DOT, 40 percent of first-time offenders become repeat offenders. It is time to try something different.

Here are the key provisions of SB 198:

- If a person uses an interlock for six months or another alcohol monitoring device such as SCRAM, he or she can petition the court to have the public OWI record expunged.
- A person who injures, kills or has a BAC of .15 or greater on their first offense is not eligible to petition the court for expungement.
- A non-public record of the first offense will remain available to law enforcement, so any subsequent OWI will properly be charged as a repeat offense.
- The public OWI record is sealed, giving the offender a chance to be a fully functioning member of society.

An interlock costs around \$2.50 a day to lease. Under current law, if the person is indigent, he or she is eligible for a reduced cost. If their annual income is less than 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), they pay only half of the regular cost of interlock installation and monthly service fee. The interlock vendors — not taxpayers — cover these costs. The FPL is adjusted annually and depends on the number of people in the household.

MADD urges you to hold a hearing on SB 198 by Senator Jacque and Representative Thiesfeldt. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact MADD Director of State Government Affairs Frank Harris at frank.harris@madd.org or 202.688.1194. Thank you in advance for your prompt consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Helen Witty
MADD National President