



Mothers Against Drunk Driving
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May 14, 2019

MADD supports AB 211 – Improving the Drunk Driving Law

The Honorable John Spiros
Chairman, Assembly Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee

Dear Chairman Spiros and Members of the Assembly Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) strongly urges you to hold a hearing and executive session on lifesaving drunk driving reform AB 211 by and Representative Thiesfeldt, which incentivizes first-time convicted drunk drivers to use an ignition interlock.

AB 211 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. AB 211 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 AB 211. **Over the past 12 years, interlocks have prevented over 300,000 attempts to drive drunk in Wisconsin.** MADD supports AB 211 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 AB 211:

- 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 AB 211 by 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