



# Jesse White

SECRETARY OF STATE

# NEWS

## ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **White Proposes Jail Sentences & Impoundment Measures for Driving on a Suspended License; Enhanced Penalties for Driving Under the Extreme Influence of Alcohol**

**SPRINGFIELD** — Secretary of State Jesse White announced a six-point legislative proposal today that includes mandatory jail sentences for motorists caught driving on suspended or revoked licenses as well as immobilization measures for their vehicles.

White also announced his intention to fight for increased penalties for motorists driving under the extreme influence of alcohol and habitual DUI offenders.

"Illinois has been a leader in efforts to combat drunk driving and to improve road safety," said White. "While we have enacted many laws that have aided our fight to remove dangerous drivers from Illinois highways, hundreds of lives are still lost each year at the hands of the most irresponsible drivers."

White's legislative proposal received strong support from law enforcement officials, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and the Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists (AAIM).

The key components of White's legislative proposal would:

- Require mandatory jail sentences for anyone caught driving on a suspended or revoked driver's license. Nearly 75,000 drivers were arrested for driving on a suspended or revoked license in 1998.
- Give judges the authority to immobilize the vehicles of persons caught driving on a suspended or revoked license by seizing the license plates, installing a boot or club device or impounding the vehicle.
- Increase penalties for driving under the extreme influence of alcohol and habitual DUI offenders. The increased penalties would kick in for anyone caught driving at twice the legal limit, .16 BAC, or higher. According to the National Transportation Safety Board, repeat DUI offenders and drivers with a BAC of .15 or greater constitute less than one percent of all drivers on the road, but account for 27 percent of drivers in fatal crashes.
- Eliminate court supervision for driving under the influence with a child in the car. Under current law, drivers could avoid the additional penalties for this crime through the supervision option. Between 1985 and 1996, more than 3,500 children under the age of 15 were killed and 58,000 children were injured in the United States while riding with a drunk driver.
- Eliminate any type of driving relief for motorists who refuse a chemical or breath test. In 1998, 38 percent of drivers stopped for suspicion of DUI refused to take the breath test.
- Expand the use of Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock (BAIID) devices as a condition of restricted driving permits for anyone with more than one DUI disposition on their driving record.

White also noted that the Secretary of State Police would increase patrols on Illinois' busiest highways throughout the Labor Day weekend. Last year, there were 15 crash fatalities in Illinois over the Labor Day weekend. Eight, or 53 percent, of those crash fatalities were alcohol related.

"I want to send a strong message to motorists that alcohol and gas don't mix. Please don't drink and drive," said White. "We are heading into a holiday weekend that includes many parties and festivities. There will be heavy traffic on our roads as people travel to meet with families and friends. Our hope is that this weekend will be filled with fond memories for all and tragedies for none."