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NEWS

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House Approves White's Legislation Targeting Drunk Drivers and Drivers Without Valid Licenses

SPRINGFIELD —The Illinois House of Representatives today unanimously approved two bills initiated by Secretary of State Jesse White targeting drunk drivers and drivers without valid licenses.

"These bills provide strong penalties for people who get behind the wheel at double the legal limit, drive drunk with a child in the car, or continue to drive after their license has been suspended or revoked," said White. "I'm pleased they received such strong support from the House of Representatives. Enacting these measures into law will help rid our highways of the most dangerous and irresponsible drivers."

The measures sailed through the House with bipartisan support. More than 30 representatives from both political parties have signed on as sponsors of White's legislation which has also received unprecedented support from anti-drunk driving advocacy groups, law enforcement officials and the beverage alcohol industry.

House Bill 2265, sponsored by State Rep. Jim Brosnahan (D-Evergreen Park), provides increased penalties including mandatory jail time for driving under the extreme influence of alcohol or driving drunk with a child in the vehicle. The measure also requires repeat DUI offenders to have a Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock Device installed in their vehicle. The device will not allow someone who has been drinking to start or operate a vehicle.

House Bill 2266, sponsored by State Rep. Mary K. O'Brien

(D-Coal City), targets people who ignore the law and continue to drive after their license has been suspended or revoked. The increased penalties include mandatory jail time and allow judges to order the driver's vehicle immobilized by removing the license plates or installing a boot on the vehicle. Nearly 75,000 drivers were arrested for driving on a suspended or revoked license in 1998.

"These are two well thought-out and extremely comprehensive pieces of legislation aimed at drastically reducing the carnage caused by the hard-core segment of the drunk driving population," said Brad Fralick, Executive Director of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) of Illinois. "We believe this legislation will have an impact upon alcohol-related traffic fatalities greater than any legislative initiative that has preceded it."

House Bills 2265 and 2266 were each approved by a vote of 114-0. The measures now move to the Senate for consideration.