



Jesse White

SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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Jesse White and MADD Team Up On Legislative Initiative to Combat DUI

Legislation that cracks down on drunk drivers has passed both chambers of the General Assembly and now moves to the governor's office for his approval. The bill is the result of joint efforts among Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), Secretary of State Jesse White, and the bill's sponsors: Senator John Cullerton (D-Chicago) and Representative Robert Molaro (D-Chicago).

Senate Bill 300 will require all first-time DUI offenders who wish to obtain driving relief during the period of statutory summary suspension to install on their vehicle a breath alcohol ignition interlock device (BAIID). Motorists are required to blow into the BAIID, which measures their blood alcohol content level. The device is designed to prevent DUI offenders from driving after having consumed alcohol.

"This measure will help improve roadway safety for all of us," said Secretary White. "Statistics show breath alcohol ignition interlock devices are very effective in preventing subsequent DUI offenses."

New Mexico implemented a similar law nearly two years ago and experienced in the first year a 12 percent reduction in alcohol related-fatalities. Moreover, studies show BAIIDs are effective in reducing subsequent offenses by up to 90 percent while on the vehicle.

"This is one of the most important pieces of DUI legislation passed in Illinois in several years because ignition interlocks stop vehicles from being driven by those who are drunk," said Glynn Birch, national president of MADD. "Illinois continues to raise the bar for other states. MADD applauds the state of Illinois for protecting its motorists from the dangers of drunk driving."

The bill also increases the length of the statutory summary suspension from three months to six months for those offenders that failed the breath alcohol test at time of arrest and from six months to 12 months for those offenders that refused the breath alcohol test at time of arrest.

In addition, the bill eliminates Judicial Driving Permits (JDPs) for first-time DUI offenders, and instead requires those offenders who wish to drive to install the BAIID before driving relief is granted. DUI offenders will be monitored during the entire time the BAIID is installed in their vehicles.

DUI offenders who cause death, great bodily harm, are under age 18 or have a prior conviction of reckless homicide are ineligible for driving relief.

"I would like to commend MADD for this initiative," said White. "They are working to enact similar legislation throughout the country in an effort to prevent the senseless tragedies caused by drunk driving."

Senate Bill 300 has an effective date of January 1, 2009.

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