



# Jesse White

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## SECRETARY OF STATE

# NEWS

**For Immediate Release:**  
November 16, 2011

**For More Information Contact:**  
Dave Druker  
Henry Haupt

### **Illinois Efforts to Combat Drunk Driving Earn Highest 5-Star Rating from MADD** *Jesse White Applauds MADD for their National Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving*

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White announced today that Illinois received the highest ranking possible by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) – garnering five stars – for our state’s efforts to combat drunk driving. White applauded MADD for their ongoing campaign to eliminate drunk driving. As part of that campaign, MADD today released their 5<sup>th</sup> annual national and state ratings report.

“I am pleased that MADD has recognized Illinois as a national leader in the fight against drunk driving,” said White. “My top priority as Secretary of State is to make the roads of Illinois as safe as possible. To accomplish this goal, I have fought continuously for tougher DUI laws, while also significantly expanding our state’s Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock Device (BAIID) program.”

White highlighted the success Illinois has made over the past decade at improving highway safety since he took office in 1999. According to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), alcohol-related crash fatalities have dropped by over 38 percent during White’s tenure in office. There were 711 alcohol-related crash fatalities in 1999, compared to 436 in 2010.

Under White’s leadership, Illinois’ groundbreaking BAIID program requires all first-time DUI offenders who wish to obtain driving relief to install a BAIID on their vehicle. Motorists are required to blow into the BAIID, which measures their blood alcohol content (BAC) levels. The device is designed to prevent DUI offenders from driving after having consumed alcohol. Since this law took effect in 2009, the number of BAIIDs installed on the vehicles of DUI offenders has quadrupled – going from 3,000 to 12,000 annually.

“I am pleased with the significant growth of the BAIID program over the last few years, which uses technology to target DUI offenders in an effort to make our roads safer, while posing no inconvenience to the vast majority of Illinoisans who are safe and responsible drivers,” said White.

In addition, White has initiated a series of tough drunk driving measures, including enhanced penalties for those that drive drunk with children in the vehicle; targeting repeat offenders and high-BAC offenders; and increasing 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.

MADD’s rating system focused on state’s adopting a series of proven drunk driving countermeasures, including but not limited to requiring BAIIDs for all convicted drunk drivers, conducting sobriety checkpoints, and creating enhanced penalties for those who drive drunk with children in the vehicle.

“While it is nice to receive recognition and praise from such an outstanding organization as MADD, this is no time for us to rest on our laurels,” said White. “I will continue working closely with MADD and other key Illinois traffic safety advocates as we look for additional ways to combat drunk driving and make our roads even safer.”

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