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**Jesse White's Proposal to Strengthen DUI Laws through Expansion of the BAID Program Receives Unanimous Support from State's Advisory Committee on Traffic Safety**

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White today asked his Advisory Committee on Traffic Safety to consider a proposal to strengthen DUI laws in Illinois through the expansion of the Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock Device (BAIID) program. The committee met in the State Capitol Building in Springfield and unanimously supported the proposal, which seeks to incorporate more DUI offenders into the BAIID program. As chairman of the committee, White indicated his next step will be to initiate legislation in the General Assembly.

"My mission as Secretary of State is to make the roads of Illinois as safe as possible," said White. "Our nationally heralded BAIID program has a proven track record of making Illinois roadways safer, stopping drunk drivers from driving and saving lives. Expansion of Illinois' BAIID program to incorporate more offenders will lead to more lives saved and a further reduction in drunk-driving incidents."

The proposal expanding the BAIID program will incorporate more offenders to include first-, second- and third-time DUI offenders. Under the proposal, offenders caught driving a vehicle not equipped with a BAIID will face fines and mandatory jail time. Studies show that offenders who have BAIIDs installed are up to 75 percent less likely to acquire a repeat drunk-driving offense than convicted drunk drivers who do not have a device installed.

Current Illinois law requires first-time DUI offenders to have a BAIID installed on all vehicles they drive as a condition of obtaining driving privileges during the driver's license suspension period. Illinois law further provides that only certain repeat offenders are required to install a BAIID in order to drive when their licenses are revoked.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), the Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists (AAIM) and law enforcement organizations testified in support of the proposal. According to MADD, Illinois' current BAIID program is credited with helping reduce drunk-driving deaths by 22 percent since it was expanded to include first-time DUI offenders in 2009. Moreover, MADD awarded Illinois with a 5-star rating in 2011 for the state's efforts to combat drunk driving, the highest ranking possible. Illinois' BAIID program was specifically referenced for the top ranking.

"MADD applauds Secretary of State Jesse White for his innovative, forward-thinking efforts to combat drunk driving," said Susan McKeigue, MADD Illinois' Executive Director. "Illinois has become a national leader in the fight against drunk driving, and Secretary White deserves a strong share of the credit. He has been a stalwart champion in the Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving from its inception. Without him, Illinois would not have the BAIID program which has proven to stop drunk drivers from driving. His efforts literally save lives."

“AAIM commends Secretary of State Jesse White’s Office for their continued efforts to remove impaired drivers from our roads,” said Rita Kreslin, Executive Director of AAIM. “AAIM has no doubt Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock Devices (BAIIDs) save lives and protect the public while being used.”

The BAIID stops any user from driving with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .025 or more. Reports of violations are electronically sent to the Secretary of State’s BAIID Division. Confirmed violations result in an extension of a driver’s suspension or revocation period.

“Our goal is to prevent vehicles from being driven by drunk drivers,” said White. “I applaud the committee for its unanimous recommendation. I want to also thank MADD and AAIM for testifying in support of this important proposal. We know from experience that our BAIID program prevents drunk driving. I believe even the best programs can be made better, and our BAIID expansion proposal will further strengthen our DUI laws and make our roads even safer.”

In 2011, there were 3,271 instances where BAIIDs prevented drivers from starting and driving a vehicle because the driver had a BAC reading of .05 or higher. In most of those cases, the BAC was .08 or higher — the legal limit for driving under the influence. In one instance, the person attempted to drive with a BAC of .33 — four times the legal limit.

Since White became Secretary of State in 1999, the office has continually worked to crack down on drunk driving. Over the years, White has helped initiate tough laws targeting repeat, hard-core drunk-driving offenders, as well as doubled the lengths of statutory summary suspensions from three to six months for failing a breathalyzer test and from six to 12 months for refusing the test.

The Advisory Committee on Traffic Safety consists of 10 members: Secretary of State Jesse White, chair; state Reps. John D’Amico (D-Chicago) and Mike McAuliffe (R-Chicago); state Sens. Martin Sandoval (D-Cicero) and Darin LaHood (R-Peoria); Anne Schneider, secretary of the Illinois Department of Transportation; Mike Witter, regional administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; Commander Jay Keeven of the Illinois State Police; John Ulczycki, vice president of the National Safety Council; and Ray Bradford, executive director of the Northwestern University Center for Public Safety.

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