
February 27, 2020

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chairman, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

Re: Letter of Support – Senate Bill 870 – Drunk Driving Offenses – Ignition Interlock System Program

Dear Chairman Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports Senate Bill 870 as an opportunity to appropriately expand the use of an effective tool in combatting the danger of drunk driving.

Senate Bill 870 serves to strengthen and increase participation in the Ignition Interlock Program (IIP) for drunk or drugged driving offenses. Namely, a driver who commits a violation of MD TA §21-902(b) – driving while impaired – and is either convicted, suspended or revoked on points, or is granted probation before judgement, *must* enter IIP.

The MDOT Motor Vehicle Administration (MDOT MVA) administers a very successful Ignition Interlock Program that has become a national model. Strengthening Maryland’s IIP program is an assertive safety measure that builds on positive steps taken in recent years to combat the epidemic of drunk driving. The MDOT MVA supports the use of the Ignition Interlock Program (IIP) as an effective measure to reduce drunk driving crashes, injuries and deaths. According to a 2012 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) study, drivers who have interlocks installed are 35 to 75 percent less likely to have a repeat drunk driving offense than convicted drunk drivers who do not have a device installed. In Maryland, the landmark 2016 passage of Noah’s Law strengthened administrative sanctions and significantly expanded the IIP. Since the passage of Noah’s Law, participation in the IIP has increased, and these changes are helping to keep more drunk drivers from getting behind the wheel and endangering the lives of others traveling on Maryland’s roadways.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant Senate Bill 870 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine E. Nizer
Administrator
Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration
410-787-7830

Jeff Tosi
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-841-2850