



VICTIM SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

February 24, 2021

The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Room 101, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Support - HB 749 – Drunk Driving Offenses - Ignition Interlock System Program

Dear Chairman Clippinger:

House Bill 749 extends the Ignition Interlock System Program to apply not only to those individuals convicted of drunk driving, but also to first-time convicted drunk drivers who are given a Probation Before Judgment (PBJ). These offenders would be required to use an ignition interlock for 180 days.

The Montgomery County Victim Services Advisory Board (VSAB) advises the County Council and County Executive on assisting the needs of victims and their family members who experience violent crimes including driving while intoxicated, vehicular manslaughter, homicide, auto theft and carjacking. During a recent six-day period, the Montgomery County Police Alcohol Holiday Task Force arrested 41 individuals for driving under the influence (DUI). Six of those arrested were involved in collisions. (<https://patch.com/maryland/rockville/41-dui-arrests-made-seventh-round-2020-21-alcohol-crackdown>, Jan. 12, 2021) During a subsequent four-day period, that task force arrested 20 more individuals for DUIs where four of these individuals were involved in collisions. A total of 262 people were arrested for DUIs during an eight-week period in our county. (<https://patch.com/maryland/rockville/20-dui-arrests-made-final-round-2020-21-alcohol-crackdown>, Jan. 20, 2021)

According to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), 32 percent of traffic deaths in Maryland in 2019 were the result of drunk driving crashes. More than 50 percent of offenders whose licenses are suspended without the interlock requirement, continue driving without a license. MADD reports that 67,197 attempts to drive drunk in Maryland have been prevented during the past 13 years by the use of the ignition interlock system. Extending this interlock requirement to PBJ cases would prevent more people from driving drunk and would save many lives.

VSAB asks the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 749.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Pontzer & Juanita Rogers
VSAB Co-chairs

Department of Health and Human Services