



## **AAA Mid-Atlantic's Testimony in Support of SB 528 – Drunk Driving Offenses - Ignition Interlock System Program**

*Sponsors: Senators Waldstreicher, Smith and West*

- AAA Mid-Atlantic **supports** [SB 528 - Drunk Driving Offenses - Ignition Interlock System Program](#), which closes a loophole in Noah's Law.
- The bill mandates participation in the Maryland Interlock Ignition System Program (IISP) for those first-time offenders, who received a sentence of probation before judgment (PBJ) for driving while under the influence of alcohol.
- This technical change to the current IISP Program is critical to safety on our roadways.
- In spite of all the strides in traffic safety and efforts to reduce impaired driving, risky driving behaviors, such as drunk driving continue to plague our nation and the state of Maryland, despite being a totally preventable crime.
- A recently released report from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found unsafe driving behaviors rose from 2020 to 2021.
- The most alarming increase was among drivers admitting to getting behind the wheel after drinking so much that they felt they were over the legal limit - **an increase of nearly 24%**.
- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimated that 42,915 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes across the country in 2021, a 10.5% increase from the 38,824 fatalities in 2020.
- According to data from NHTSA, approximately 30% of all traffic crash fatalities in the United States involve drunk drivers (with BACs of .08 g/dL or higher).
- In 2021, in Maryland, out of a total of 563 traffic fatalities, 173, or slightly more than 30%, involved a driver who was impaired by alcohol and/or drugs, according to preliminary data by the [Maryland Highway Safety Office](#).
- Expanded use of ignition interlocks would help save lives in Maryland by preventing subsequent offenses, especially considering a large number (more than 50%) of first-time drunk driving offenders receive a PBJ sentence, according to the Maryland Department of Transportation's 2022 "*Maryland's Ignition Interlock Program, Status Report.*"

- According to the *Maryland Task Force to Combat Driving Under the Influence of Drugs and Alcohol*, the use of ignition interlock systems has been shown to lead to long-lasting changes in driver behavior and the reduction of recidivism.
- The Task Force concluded that states, which have extended required times for ignition interlock use for certain drunk driving offenses, have experienced a 60 – 95% decrease in recidivism.
- According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, ignition interlocks reduce repeat DWI offenses by approximately 70%.
- We recognize that interlocks are no panacea, but they are an effective tool in preventing impaired individuals from driving, endangering themselves and others on Maryland roadways.
- In every state, it's illegal to drive drunk, yet one person was killed in a drunk-driving crash every 45 minutes in the United States in 2020, according to NHTSA.
- We respectfully thank this Committee for all you have done in the past to combat drunk driving on Maryland roads and urge you to do even more by strengthening Maryland's law by expanding the use of ignition interlocks, a measure that has proven to be effective in the fight against drunk driving.
- On behalf of the more than one million AAA members in Maryland, we respectfully request this Committee give **SB 528** a favorable report.

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