



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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HB 451

DATE: February 8, 2023

SPONSOR: Delegate Atterbeary

ASSIGNED TO: Judiciary

CONTACT PERSON: Sara Morningstar (Sara.Morningstar@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: SUPPORT

Drunk Driving Offenses – Ignition Interlock System Program

House Bill 451 expands mandatory participation in Maryland's ignition interlock system program to include an individual who is granted probation before judgment (PBJ) for driving under the influence of alcohol or under the influence of alcohol per se or impaired by alcohol. If the offender refuses to participate in or fails to complete the program, the individual's license will be suspended by the Motor Vehicle Administration until the program is successfully completed. This is a 2023 legislative priority for Montgomery County.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported that in 2020, there were 11,654 alcohol-impaired driving deaths in the United States. Translated, about 32 people die every day in drunk driving crashes. This is a 14 percent increase in preventable deaths from 2019. Maryland made important changes to the State's impaired driving laws in 2016 by enacting Noah's Law (the Drunk Driving Reduction Act) that included increased penalties and expansion of its ignition interlock system program. While that law was a major step forward toward getting drunk drivers off the road, it did not go far enough.

Too many drunk drivers in Maryland continue to receive PBJs for driving under the influence (DUI), but if they complete a probationary period, they were not convicted of the violation, and therefore, were not required to have an ignition interlock device installed on their vehicles. Because most drunk drivers are repeat offenders, it is very likely that those receiving PBJs will get behind the wheel again and will endanger themselves and everyone around them. Ignition interlock programs work in reducing DUI recidivism. HB 451 will close this dangerous loophole in Noah's Law. Montgomery County urgently requests that the Committee adopt a favorable report on HB 451.