



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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**SB 421**

**DATE: February 13, 2024**

**SPONSOR: Senator Waldstreicher, et al.**

**ASSIGNED TO: Judicial Proceedings**

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**POSITION: SUPPORT**

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### **Drunk Driving Offenses – Ignition Interlock System Program**

Senate Bill 421 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 2024 legislative priority for Montgomery County.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported that in 2021, there were 13,384 alcohol-impaired driving deaths in the United States – a 14% increase from 2020. That is one person every 39 minutes. Importantly, these deaths were preventable. Maryland made major 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 big step toward getting drunk drivers off the road, it didn't go far enough.

Too many drunk drivers in Maryland continue to receive PBJs for driving under the influence (DUI). If they complete a probationary period, however, they're not convicted of the violation, and therefore, aren't required to have an ignition interlock device installed on their vehicles. Because most drunk drivers are repeat offenders, it's 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. Senate Bill 421 will close this dangerous loophole in Noah's Law. Montgomery County urgently requests that the Committee adopt a favorable report on Senate Bill 421.