



February 12, 2024

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

Dear Chairman William C. Smith Jr.,

The Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility (Responsibility.org) is a national not-for-profit that leads the fight to eliminate drunk driving and underage drinking and is funded by the following distillers: Campari Group; Constellation Brands, Inc.; Bacardi U.S.A., Inc.; Beam Suntory; Brown-Forman; DIAGEO; Edrington; Mast-Jägermeister US Inc.; Moët Hennessy USA; Ole Smoky LLC; Pernod Ricard USA; and William Grant & Sons. To learn more, visit www.responsibility.org.

Responsibility.org supports the passage of **Maryland Senate Bill 421**, legislation advocating for the requirement of ignition interlock devices for first-time DUI offenders sentenced to probation before judgement (PBJ) for 180 days as part of their probation terms. The mandate for ignition interlocks is **already** in place for individuals who decline the BAC test, those convicted on their first offense, and repeat offenders. This proposed law aims to enhance the measures introduced by Noah's Law in 2016, named to honor Noah Leotta. Presently, 34 states along with the District of Columbia mandate the installation of ignition interlocks for all convicted offenders.

In Maryland during 2023, over half of the DUI/DWI cases, accounting for 51% of the 10,161 incidents, ended with the offenders receiving Probation Before Judgement (PBJ). Drunk driving is a major issue, being the cause of a third of all traffic-related deaths in the state. On an annual basis, about 6,600 incidents of impaired driving occur, leading to almost 3,000 injuries and 170 deaths that could have been avoided. The Ignition Interlock Program in Maryland played a crucial role in 2022 by **thwarting 3,650 attempts** by drivers to operate vehicles while over the legal blood alcohol limit.

Maryland's Noah's Law is working, with 3rd and subsequent offenses decreasing, we are supporting this legislation so individuals receiving a PBJ are not able to drive drunk again. Nationally, drivers who install ignition interlocks are up to 75% less likely to have a repeat DUI than those without an interlock, and for those who cannot afford an interlock, Maryland has a robust ignition interlock affordability program for those who qualify for certain financial need programs. **We urge swift passage of Senate Bill 421.**

Responsibility.org stands ready to assist Maryland in its efforts to reduce impaired driving. Please contact me at Kelly.Poulsen@Responsibility.org or Chris Korschak at Chris.Korschak@Responsibility.org for any assistance we can provide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelly Poulsen".

Kelly Poulsen
Senior Vice President, Government Relations Responsibility.org

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Darrin T. Grondel".

Darrin T. Grondel, Ph.D. Director, NASID
Senior Vice President, Traffic Safety Responsibility.org