



**AAA Mid-Atlantic's Testimony in Support of
SB 421 – Drunk Driving Offenses - Ignition Interlock System Program**
Sponsors: Senators Waldstreicher, Folden, Kelly, Muse, Smith and West

- AAA Mid-Atlantic **supports** [SB 421 – Drunk Driving Offenses – Ignition Interlock System Program](#), which closes a loophole in the *Drunk Driving Reduction Act of 2016*, also known as Noah's Law.
- The bill mandates participation in the Maryland Interlock Ignition System Program (IISP) for first-time offenders, who receive 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 the 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](#) shows a vast majority of drivers - 94% - overwhelmingly perceive driving after drinking alcohol as dangerous and 68% believe such a driver would likely be apprehended by police. However, despite the perceived dangers and risk of being caught, seven percent of respondents reported having engaged in this behavior in the past 30 days.
- According to the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\)](#), in 2021, 13,384 people died in alcohol-impaired driving traffic deaths – a 14% increase from 2020. Fatalities in crashes involving alcohol-impaired drivers continue to represent almost one-third (31%) of the total motor vehicle fatalities in the United States.
- According to data from NHTSA, approximately 30% of all traffic crash fatalities in the U.S. involve drunk drivers (with BACs of .08 g/dL or higher).
- In 2022, there were 534 fatal crashes in Maryland, resulting in 566 deaths, according to preliminary data from the [MDOT MVA Highway Safety Office](#). Drug and/or alcohol involvement was a factor in 135 of those crashes, resulting in 146 deaths – nearly 26% of Maryland roadway fatalities. (*Source: MDOT MVA Highway Safety Office, data as of February 12, 2024*)

- 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 Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA)’s [2024 Ignition Interlock Report](#), released earlier this month, *“Research continues to find that ignition interlock devices are effective in reducing recidivism by impaired drivers when there is an interlock device in the vehicle. State ignition interlock laws are associated with reductions in alcohol-involved fatal crashes. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, Maryland’s IIP prevented nearly 3,000 attempts to start or operate a vehicle where the driver’s blood alcohol concentration (BAC) was greater than 0.08...”*
- 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 is killed in a drunk-driving crash every 39 minutes in the U.S., 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 421** a favorable report.

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