



February 12, 2024

The Honorable Will Smith
Chair, Senate Committee on Judicial Proceedings
Miller Senate Office Building, Room 2-East
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Bill S. 421

Dear Chairman Smith and members of the Committee:

The National Safety Council (NSC) respectfully encourages you to support S. 421, a bill to require alcohol impaired drivers arrested for a first offense driving under the influence (DUI) who are sentenced to probation before judgment (PBJ) to complete 180 days on an ignition interlock device as a condition of their probation. Currently, ignition interlocks are mandatory for people who refuse the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) test, convicted first offenders and repeat offenders. Currently, 34 states and the District of Columbia require all offenders to install ignition interlocks. In addition to saving lives, passage of this legislation would qualify Maryland for incentive grant funds.

NSC is America's leading nonprofit safety advocate and has been for 110 years. As a mission-based organization, we work to eliminate the leading causes of preventable death and injury, focusing our efforts on the workplace and roadway. We create a culture of safety to keep people safer in the workplace and beyond so they can live their fullest lives. Our more than 13,000 member companies and federal agencies represent employees at nearly 41,000 U.S. worksites, including 345 members in Maryland.

The most dangerous thing most people do every day is drive or ride in a car. In 2021, 561 lives were lost on Maryland roads – all in completely preventable crashes.¹ Of those fatalities, 35 percent involved alcohol-impaired driving.² Driving under the influence of alcohol continues to be one of the biggest safety issues on U.S. roads. In 2021, 13,384 people were killed in alcohol-impaired crashes, an increase of 14.2% from 2020 and the most deaths recorded since 2006.³

Strong ignition interlock laws work to reduce both alcohol-impaired deaths and alcohol-impaired driving recidivism. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, laws like S. 421 are proven to reduce drunk driving deaths by 16 percent.⁴ Additionally, data show repeat DUI offenses decrease when ignition interlocks devices are installed.⁵

¹ <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/state-data/motor-vehicle-deaths-by-state/>

² <https://cdan.dot.gov/stsi.htm>

³ <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/motor-vehicle/motor-vehicle-safety-issues/alcohol-impaired-driving/>

⁴ <https://www.iihs.org/news/detail/state-laws-mandating-interlocks-for-all-dui-offenders-save-lives#:~:text=Laws%20requiring%20all%20impaired%2Ddriving,could%20be%20saved%20each%20year.>

⁵ https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/impaired_driving/ignition_interlock_states.html



In 2022, Maryland's Ignition Interlock Program prevented 3,650 attempts to start or operate a vehicle where the driver's blood alcohol concentration was above the legal limit.⁶ Nationally, ignition interlocks have stopped over 29 million total attempts to drive drunk over the last 14 years.⁷ These devices are a commonsense measure that will save lives.

NSC encourages you to support S. 421, a bill that will reduce repeat DUIs and save lives on Maryland roadways. To eliminate roadway fatalities, we must use every tool at our disposal to prevent crashes and save lives – including the proven technology of interlock devices. If you have any questions, or if NSC can be of further assistance on this issue, please contact Government Affairs Manager, Alaina Dahlquist at Alaina.Dahlquist@nsc.org or 771-333-0677.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Lorraine Martin'.

Lorraine Martin
President & CEO

⁶ <https://mva.maryland.gov/about-mva/Documents/Ignition%20Interlock%20Program%20Status%20Report%20FY22%20Final.pdf>

⁷ <https://interlockciim.org/>