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WASHINGTON REGIONAL ALCOHOL PROGRAM

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February 13, 2024

Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee
Maryland Senate
Annapolis, Maryland

Re.: Support for "Drunk Driving Offenses – Ignition Interlock System Program,"
Senate Bill 421, Senator Waldstreicher (D-Montgomery County)

**"Interlocks typically are used as a condition of probation
for DWI offenders, to prevent them from driving while impaired by
alcohol after their driver's licenses have been reinstated."**

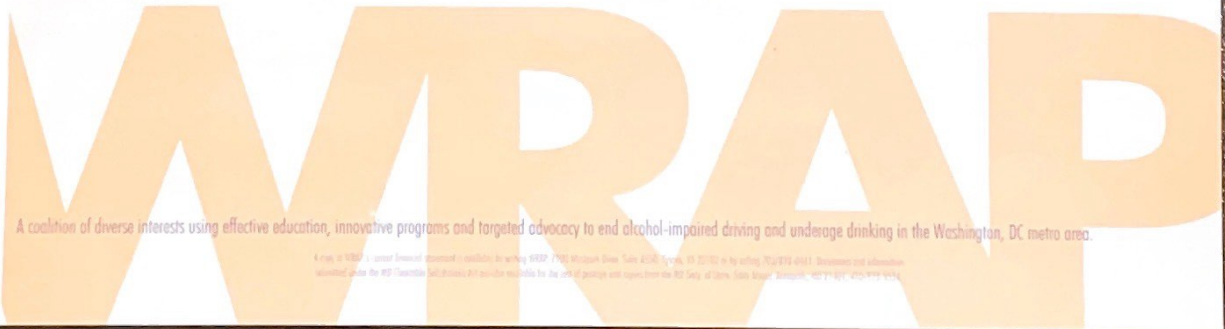
— National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), "Countermeasures That Work," 2023

Dear Senators:

On behalf of the Maryland nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program's (WRAP) Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and the more than six-million Maryland residents we serve in the fight against drunk driving and underage drinking (including having served as project director of both Maryland's Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign and "Maryland Remembers" ceremony), I wanted to formally communicate to you **WRAP's unequivocal support for Senate Bill 421, "Drunk Driving Offenses – Ignition Interlock System Program"** (Judicial Proceedings Committee Vice Chairman, Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, D-Montgomery County).

Succinctly, Senate Bill 421 seeks to expand the universe of persons subject to Maryland's Ignition Interlock System Program to include persons put on probation for either a driving under the influence of alcohol (DUI, 21-902[a]) or driving while impaired by alcohol (DWI, 21-902[b]) violation.

(over)



A coalition of diverse interests using effective education, innovative programs and targeted advocacy to end alcohol-impaired driving and underage drinking in the Washington, DC metro area.

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According to the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) ("Ignition Interlock Report," February 2024), more than half (50.47%) of persons (in closed cases) adjudicated for either DUI or DWI in Maryland in 2022 were granted probation in the form of probation before judgment (PBJ) and therefore NOT subject to the full universe of public protections namely participation in Maryland's proven effective interlock program.

With ignition interlock devices reducing "repeat offenses for driving while intoxicated by about 70-percent" (U.S. Centers for Disease Control) and that interlocks are proven to be "highly effective in allowing a vehicle to be started by sober drivers but not by alcohol-impaired drivers" (NHTSA), Senate Bill 421 looks to simply ensure public safety along that route used by half of persons arrested for drunk driving in Maryland by subjecting *all* 21-902(a) and 21-902(b) offenders to Maryland's interlock program as a condition of (PBJ) probation.

NHTSA data ("Countermeasures That Work," 2023) shows that "interlocks typically are used as a condition of probation for DWI offenders, to prevent them from driving while impaired by alcohol after their driver's licenses have been reinstated." The need for such in Maryland is all too clear as fiscal year 2023 MVA interlock program data shows that more than 6,800 drivers were prevented from driving after consuming alcohol last year.

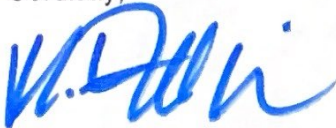
"State ignition interlock laws are associated with reductions in alcohol-involved fatal crashes" and Maryland's interlock program "remains a key strategy in the state's fight against alcohol-impaired driving" (MVA). In a state where approximately a third of traffic fatalities still involve drunk drivers (MVA), *not* using Maryland's existing -- and offender-paid -- interlock program for the full universe of DUI and or DWI offenders in the state is, at best, not using every tool in Maryland's toolbox to prevent drunk driving.

□□□□□

As a means of both more effectively monitoring a drunk driver's probation period in Maryland and strengthening Maryland's "Drunk Driving Reduction Act of 2016" ("Noah's Law") which "continues to have an impact on Maryland's Ignition Interlock Program and is helping to keep drunk drivers off the road" (MVA), the Maryland nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program strongly supports Senate Bill 421. To that end, we also thank you, in advance, for your consideration of favorably reporting this potentially lifesaving legislation.

Thank you, in advance, for your consideration. I may be directly reached with any questions at either 703-893-0461 or at kurt@wrap.org.

Cordially,



Kurt Gregory Erickson
President