

CO-SPONSORSHIP MEMORANDUM

Date: December 17, 2018
To: Members of the Wisconsin State Legislature

From: Senator Chris Larson
Representative Christine Sinicki
Representative Jonathan Brostoff

Re: Co-sponsorship of LRB-1063/P1, relating to: requiring an ignition interlock device to be installed for committing a drunken driving offense.

DEADLINE: Monday, January 14, 2019

On Christmas Eve 1998, I woke up to find out that my good friend, and classmate at Thomas More High School, Jennie, had been killed by a drunk driver the night before. It was a devastating blow to each of her friends and everyone who knew her. It was a horrible, preventable tragedy and something that shaped each of our lives going forward. Unfortunately, with 179 deaths related to drunk driving in 2017, stories like this are too common in Wisconsin.

Sadly, almost twenty years later, tragedies like Jennie's are still happening because Wisconsin's laws are woefully inadequate in addressing and preventing drunk driving in Wisconsin. With nearly 26% of adults admitting to driving while intoxicated, Wisconsin continues to top the national charts with the highest rate of drunk driving. More alarmingly, first-time OWI offenders are estimated to have driven under the influence at least 80 times before their initial conviction.

The use of ignition interlock devices (IIDs) has shown to be successful in changing offenders' behavior. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), ignition interlock devices reduce drunk driving recidivism by 67% when they are installed on vehicles of offenders.

Additionally, from December 1, 2015 to December 1, 2016, IIDs have prevented 37,229 attempts to drive drunk on Wisconsin roads. These devices separate drinking from driving, and are proven effective in stopping drunk driving. Though the use of IIDs was expanded in the past for first-time offenders to include drivers with high blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .15 or higher, we can go further to ensure safe driving on Wisconsin roadways. This law will ensure that anyone who is convicted of an OWI must install an IID, no matter what their BAC level.

This legislation's purpose is to increase the accountability of offenders in order to change the culture and behavior of drinking and driving in Wisconsin.

If you have any questions or would like to co-sponsor this legislation, please respond to this email or contact Senator Larson's office at 266-7505 by Noon on January 14, 2019. Co-signers will be included on the Assembly bill unless otherwise directed.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill requires a court to order the operating privileges of a person who commits any OWI offense, regardless of his or her alcohol concentration, to be restricted to operating vehicles that are equipped with an ignition interlock device.

For further information see the state and local fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.