



CHRIS LARSON

STATE SENATOR

February 10th, 2023

Contact:

Senator Chris Larson
(608) 266-7505

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gov. Evers on the right track with budget provision to prevent drunk driving, save lives

Milwaukee, WI - State Senator Chris Larson (D - MKE) issued the following statement in response to Governor Tony Evers' proposal to prevent drunk driving in advance of next week's state budget release:

"To our great shame, Wisconsin continues to lead the nation in drunk driving. Changing this will require a significant shift in the drinking culture in our state. Today, Governor Evers announced a comprehensive set of budget solutions to combat our wider reckless driving problem. All of them have the potential to make our roads safer and reduce pedestrian fatalities, but one specific provision meant to combat drunk driving is perhaps the most promising.

"I was particularly excited to see the inclusion of universal Ignition Interlock Devices (IIDs) for all drunk driving offenses. IIDs are devices that prevent a vehicle from starting or operating while the driver is intoxicated.

"After losing a dear friend of mine to a drunk driver over 24 years ago, I've made it a priority of mine to work on legislation to combat drunk driving as long as I've been a state senator. Most legislation related to drunk driving focuses on fines and penalties. Those are certainly important. Wisconsin remains the only state in the nation that treats a first offense for drunk driving as a mere traffic violation. I've long been a sponsor of bipartisan legislation to change that.

"But the data shows that even repeat offenders without valid licenses still get behind the wheel and drive every single day. IIDs have the unique ability to prevent drunk driving BEFORE it occurs. In fact, research shows IIDs to be [74% more effective](#) at preventing drunk driving than a suspended driver's license for first-time offenders. Over a 12-year period, IIDs stopped over 3 million drunk driving attempts nationwide, and 300,000 in Wisconsin (MADD). Expanding IID requirements to first-time offenses will prevent even more attempts and will save innocent lives.

"In addition to the IID provision, Evers' investments in traffic calming, complete streets, law enforcement, immigrant licenses, and driver education will all go a long way to creating safer roads across Wisconsin."

WISCONSIN STATE CAPITOL
P.O. Box 7882 • MADISON, WISCONSIN 53707-7882
(608) 266-7505 • (800) 361-5487 • FAX: (608) 282-3547
SEN.LARSON@LEGIS.WI.GOV • SENATORCHRISLARSON.COM