



**State of Connecticut**  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

**REPRESENTATIVE TOM REYNOLDS**  
ASSISTANT MAJORITY LEADER  
FORTY-SECOND ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
ROOM 4033  
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591  
HOME: (860) 464-0441  
CAPITOL: (860) 240-8585  
TOLL FREE: 1-800-842-8267  
FAX: (860) 240-0206  
E-mail: Tom.Reynolds@cga.ct.gov

**VICE CHAIRMAN**  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**MEMBER**  
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

**Testimony of Representative Tom Reynolds**  
**Transportation Committee**  
**March 11, 2009**

**SB 151, AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF IGNITION INTERLOCK DEVICES IN MOTOR VEHICLES**

Senator DeFronzo, Representative Guerrero, and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee, I am pleased to testify in support of SB 151, An Act Concerning the Use of Ignition Interlock Devices in Motor Vehicles.

**HISTORY**

For many years, there was much progress towards reducing drunk driving deaths in Connecticut and across the nation. From 1980 and into the 1990's alcohol-related automobile accidents declined considerably across the country, as a result of tougher drunk driving laws, more aggressive enforcement, and education, prevention and advocacy by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). Unfortunately, this progress has come to a screeching halt. Rates of drunk driving deaths have stagnated nationally and increased in Connecticut.

Alcohol-related traffic deaths in our nation are at their highest level ever since 1992. In 2006, an estimated 17,602 people died in alcohol-related traffic crashes in the U.S.—an average of one every 30 minutes. Impaired driving is the most frequently committed violent crime in our nation.

In 2002, surveys estimate that Americans took over 159 million alcohol-impaired driving trips, compared with only 116 million in 1997. Approximately 1.4 million drivers were arrested in 2004 for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics. This is an arrest rate of 1 for every 139 licensed drivers in the United States. The estimated cost to society resulting from alcohol-related crashes is more than \$50B per year.

Current state law provides for limited use of IID. After a second, third or subsequent conviction of DUI, an offender can request reinstatement of their license after serving a minimal license suspension if they agree to install and use an IID for the remainder of their suspension period.

The language in SB 151 proposes mandated use of IID for all persons convicted of DUI. Given the fiscal impact this will trigger and in light of the current budget deficit, I wish to propose an alternative model that could most likely be achieved within available DMV resources.

Between 50-75% of those whose licenses are suspended for DUI continue to drive anyway. Therefore, I propose that we leave untouched for now the IID requirements in current criminal and administrative per se statutes. Rather, I propose revising Sec. 14-215(c), which relates to penalties for driving while a license is suspended as a result of a DUI offense. Any person who operates a motor vehicle while serving a license suspension for DUI will be subject to mandatory use of IID following the completion of their suspension period. This model targets chronic offenders, focuses on those who violate the conditions of their original penalty for DUI, and greatly reduces the fiscal impact.

#### **CONCLUSION**

We are experiencing a growing sense of complacency about drunk driving among public policy makers and the general public. This complacency carries deadly consequences for our state, yet this public health and safety crisis continues with no response.

Connecticut has one of the weakest ignition interlock laws in the country. Today's bill is the next step in addressing this shortcoming.

Every drunk driving death is a preventable crime. The time for complacency is over. The time for legislative and gubernatorial leadership is now.