



**CAMPAIGN TO  
ELIMINATE  
DRUNK DRIVING**

965

**Johanna Krebs  
Victim Services Specialist  
Connecticut Affiliate of Mothers Against Drunk Driving  
Before the Joint Judiciary Committee  
Testimony in Support of Ignition Interlocks for All Convicted Drunk Drivers**

Co-Chair Coleman, Co-Chair Fox and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers. My name is Johanna Krebs, Victim Services Specialist for the Connecticut Affiliate of Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

In November 2006, MADD launched its Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving throughout the United States, which includes support for all-offender ignition interlock laws. Prior to the Campaign launching in 2006, only one state, New Mexico, had a law requiring ignition interlocks for all first time convicted drunk drivers. Now, thirteen states and a pilot program in California have laws requiring or highly incentivizing interlock usage by all first time convicted DUI offenders.<sup>i</sup>

MADD's support of ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers is simple—it is about saving lives. Countless studies show that ignition interlock devices for all convicted DUI offenders is the most highly effective tool available to stop drunk driving.

Ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers will save lives. In New Mexico, drunk driving re-arrests are down statewide by 37 percent, alcohol involved crashes down by 31 percent, alcohol related injuries down by 39 percent and alcohol related fatalities down by nearly 30 percent. In Arizona, drunk driving fatalities have dropped by 46 percent since their interlock law.

Drunk driving is a violent crime. But it is ultimately a 100 percent preventable crime. While nationally drunk driving deaths have decreased, Connecticut has witness an increase in drunk

driving fatalities from 2008 to 2009. Drunk driving fatalities accounted for 44 percent of all total traffic deaths in our State. As a result, MADD ranks Connecticut 50<sup>th</sup> when it comes to progress in stopping drunk driving. This is unacceptable.

By advancing legislation that requires ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers, the Committee can send a clear message to drunk drivers: if they violate the public's trust by driving drunk, they will receive an ignition interlock—or in-car breathalyzer—on their vehicle.

Ignition interlocks should not be an option for convicted drunk drivers, they should be a requirement. Requiring this technology is also an economically sound public safety measure. In 2009, the economic cost of drunk driving fatalities to the people and state of Connecticut was \$683 million. Every life saved by the device translates to millions of taxpayer dollars no longer spent subsidizing drunk drivers. A study of New Mexico's interlock program found the cost of an interlock was \$2.25 a day for the offender, but for every dollar invested on first offender interlock laws the public saves three dollars.<sup>ii</sup>

Some may argue that requiring ignition interlocks for first time offenders is too harsh. This is not the case. We know that the average first time offender has driven drunk before—one particular study showed drunk drivers getting on the road an average of 87 times before the first arrest.<sup>iii</sup> We know it is not enough to simply revoke the license of a convicted drunk driver. Studies show that 50 to 75 percent of convicted drunk drivers continue to drive even while their license is suspended. This is the reason that interlocks are so critical to protecting the public.

You will also hear talk about punishing those who are one sip over the legal limit. The illegal limit in Connecticut is a .08 blood alcohol concentration. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism notes that to get to a .08 BAC, men must typically consume 5 or more drinks, and women must typically consume 4 or more drinks, in about 2 hours. A standard drink is defined as 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 72-proof distilled spirits, all of which contain the same amount of alcohol – about .54 ounces.<sup>iv</sup> The fact is that interlocks don't prohibit someone from going to the bar or restaurant, they prevent convicted drunk drivers from driving drunk and endangering the public.

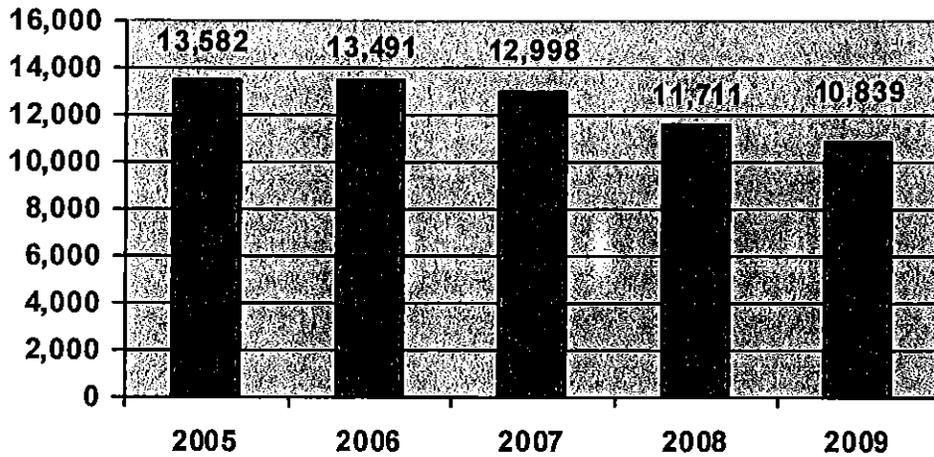
Interlocks work for both society and for the offender—they allow convicted offenders a mobility they would not have with a license suspension or jail time, while also keeping the public safe.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving believes this Committee should also advance legislation toughening the state's approach to those who drive drunk with a child passenger under the age of 16 in a vehicle. Connecticut is one of thirteen states with lacking a DUI child endangerment law. Every child deserves a sober designated driver. Driving drunk with a child passenger in a vehicle is a form of child abuse. It is time for the punishment to fit the crime. MADD believes in these cases, a convicted offender should have double the time on an ignition interlock and prosecutors should be able to charge the offender with a felony.

In conclusion, Mothers Against Drunk Driving urges this Committee to advance legislation that requires interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers. The support of this concept is simple—it is about saving lives. This technology for convicted drunk drivers will change the status quo in Connecticut and help to stop drunk driving. For this reason, MADD urges this committee to support expanding Connecticut's current interlock program for all convicted drunk drivers.

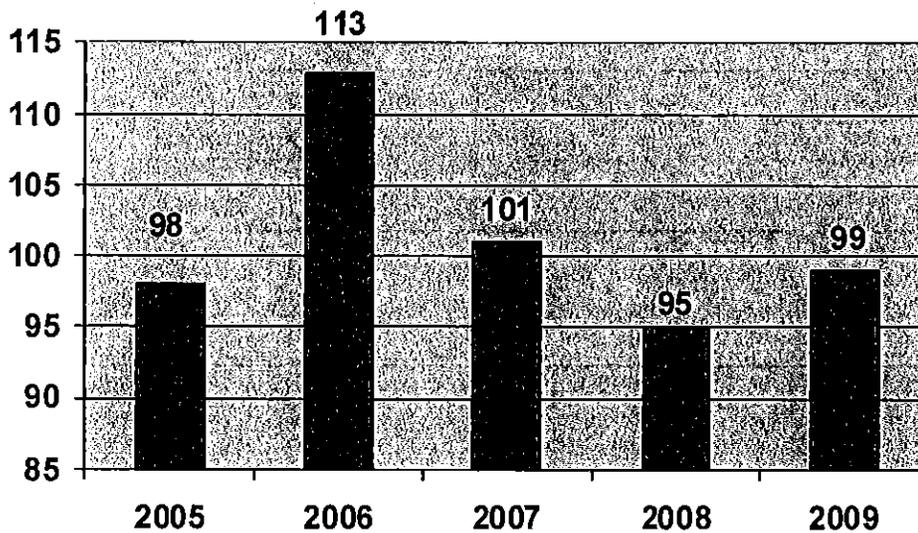
Thank you.

## **Drunk Driving Fatalities in the United States**



**In the United States, drunk driving fatalities decreased by 20 percent since 2005**

## Drunk Driving Fatalities in Connecticut



**In Connecticut, progress in reducing drunk driving fatalities have stalled**

*Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration ([www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov))*

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<sup>i</sup> New Mexico, Arizona, Louisiana, Illinois, Washington, Nebraska, Alaska, Colorado, Arkansas, Utah, Hawaii, New York, Oregon

<sup>ii</sup> Roth, Richard, Voas, Robert and Marques, Paul (2007) 'Interlocks for First Offenders: Effective?', *Traffic Injury Prevention*, 8:4, 346 – 352 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15389580701598559>

<sup>iii</sup> Zador, Paul, Sheila Krawchuk, and B. Moore (1997) "Drinking and Driving Trips, Stops by Police, and Arrests: Analysis of the 1995 National Survey of Drinking and Driving Attitudes and Behavior," Rockville, MD: Estat, Inc. 1997.

<sup>iv</sup> National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. "Alcohol Screening and Brief Intervention in the Medical Setting." DOT HS 809 467. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, July 2002.



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The following is information for four state-approved ignition interlock companies charge their customers. The following information is based on telephone calls to sales representatives of the four companies. The figures are similar to those provided us by DMV.

The four companies are SOL America; Consumer Safety Tech, Inc.; Draeger Safety Diagnostics; and Smart Start, Inc.

For comparison purposes, we include the costs of installation, a 24-month lease, and removal for each company. Three companies include recalibration in their leases; one company (CST) does not. We list CST's recalibration fees separately. We provide the estimated total cost of the 24-month lease and the estimated daily cost (total cost divided by 730 days).

The totals do not include the costs of obtaining "lockout codes," which enable a customer to restore the device after it has prevented him from operating the vehicle. Those costs would depend on a particular individual's compliance with the program. We list these costs separately.

Finally, although these figures are based on the information we received, we emphasize that they are only estimates. We can check with the companies to provide you with more precise figures if you wish.

#### **1. SOL America**

Monthly lease: \$70

Installation: \$100

Initial Set-up: \$40

Removal \$65

Lockout Code: \$45

Recalibration: included.

24 month total:  $(70 \times 24 + 100 + 40 + 65) = \$1,885.$

Daily cost  $(1,885/730) = \$2.58$

## 2. Consumer Safety Tech

Monthly lease: \$65

Installation: Depends on area of the country. In South Windsor, installation starts at \$90.

Initial set up: \$65 (refundable deposit).

Removal: \$40

Lockout fee: \$75 plus shipping

Recalibration fee: \$15 in South Windsor. (In some areas of country as much as \$45).

24 month total ( $\$65 \times 24 + 90 + 40 + (15 \times 11)$ ) = \$1,855

Daily Cost ( $1,855/730$ ) = \$2.54

## 3. Draeger Safety Diagnostics

Fees determined by local installers. We checked with one in Manchester.

Monthly lease: \$100

Installation \$125

Removal: \$45

Lockout Fee: \$30

Recalibration: included.

24-month total: ( $100 \times 24 + 125 + 45$ ) = \$2,570

Daily Cost ( $2,570/730$ ) = \$3.52

## 4. Smart Start

Monthly lease: \$74.95

Installation: free (They're running a special. Otherwise, it's \$50 to \$60).

Removal: \$75

Lockout fee: \$75

Recalibration: included

24 month total ( $74.95 \times 24 + 50 + 75$ ) = \$ 1,923.80

Daily Cost: ( $1,923.8/730$ ) = \$2.64



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