

William S. Church
(Son Dustin was killed by a drunk driver)
Testimony before the Judiciary Committee on Senate Bill 1166
in Support of Ignition Interlocks for All Convicted Drunk Drivers
April 15, 2013

A drunk driver killed our son Dustin on July 10th, 2004. He was only 18 years old. Imagine, for just a minute, a policeman coming to your door and telling you that your son is dead. Now, don't think about it anymore, because it becomes too painful, even if it's not real. When it is real, you can't imagine the pain.

You see, not only is your son dead, but so are his children, and their children, an entire branch of a family is gone. There will be no graduation ceremonies, or engagements or weddings. There will be no baseball or bedtime stories with the grand children. The surprise and laughter of Christmas morning will never happen. It's all gone because someone got drunk and drove.

There is nothing you can do about that. There is no bill you can pass or law that you can make that can bring Dustin back to life. But there is something you can do to save others.

Changing behavior is the key to saving lives. Suspending driver's licenses for longer periods of time doesn't change behavior. People still have to drive to work. People still have to drive to the grocery store. This is a society in which driving is almost a necessity. It's been proven time after time that people continue to drive whether they have a license or not. But if

they can't start their car, they can't drive. That's the whole point of an ignition interlock system. If you've had too much to drink, the system won't let you start your car. If you have somebody else blow into the device so you can start your car, the system requires you to take the test again periodically. If you don't, or you don't pass, the lights on your car flash and the horn blares. Law enforcement officers recognize the signs.

The beauty of ignition interlock is that it is paid for by the offender and installed and monitored by an authorized company. The State isn't burdened with the process, meaning there is little expense. The offender is able to continue his life, yet his ability to end someone else's is reduced dramatically. With each turn of the key that doesn't start the car, the offender's behavior is potentially being modified and safety on the roads is certainly improved.

I'd like to commend the Judiciary Committee for the elements in this bill that help to improve the Ignition Interlock laws. Attached are elements that I believe will provide Connecticut with a comprehensive Ignition Interlock Law.

William S. Church

Components of a Comprehensive Ignition Interlock Law

Mandatory Photo ID/Interlocks as a condition of probation for all convicted offenders

- 1 year mandatory Photo/ID ignition interlock for 1st offense
 - If diversion chosen, mandatory Photo/ID ignition interlock for 1 year is included
- 2 years for second offense, D felony
- 3 years for 3rd offense
- 5 years for 4th offense or more

For all offenders

- Drivers license indicating mandatory Photo/ID Ignition Interlock
- Allow DMV to set fee to cover cost
- Removal of Photo/ID Ignition Interlock is compliance based
 - No BAC over .025 (1 year begins from last violation)
- Vehicle forfeiture for driving a non-interlocked vehicle while revoked for DWI
- Criminal sanction for circumvention of IID

Between Arrest and Adjudication

- Immobilization of vehicle or Ignition Interlock Device
- Interlock as a condition of bond

For offenders who claim “no vehicle” or “not driving”

- Electronic Sobriety Monitoring (Photo/ID Home Monitoring)
- Daily requirement of morning and evening alcohol-free breath tests as a condition of probation or
- \$1000/yr for supervised probation

For offenders claiming they are indigent

- Objective standards will be used by the court such as income support or food stamps