



STATEMENT BY DAVID KELLY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
COALITION OF IGNITION INTERLOCK MANUFACTURERS

ENERGY & COMMERCE CONSUMER PROTECTION
AND COMMERCE SUBCOMMITTEE

HEARING ON ENHANCING VEHICLE TECHNOLOGY
TO PREVENT DRUNK DRIVING

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Chairman Schakowsky, Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers, members of the subcommittee, thank you for the invitation to appear before you today to discuss an issue that I have dedicated most of my professional career towards – reducing drunk driving. I am David Kelly, the Executive Director of the Coalition of Ignition Interlock Manufacturers (CIIM).

CIIM is composed of the nation's leading companies that manufacture ignition interlock devices. These devices prohibit alcohol-impaired persons from starting their vehicle. Our shared goal is to provide state administrators, courts, and policy makers the tools necessary to keep our roads and highways safe from drunk drivers. We combine our member's expertise, innovation, and experience to speak with one voice to reduce vehicle-related fatalities caused by alcohol-impaired drivers. Our voice brings credible, factual information on ignition interlock devices to public policy discussions.

Ignition interlocks do what no other technology available today does — they stop drunk drivers from starting their vehicles. An ignition interlock device is a breathalyzer about the size of a cell phone that is installed in a drunk driving offender's car to prevent drinking and driving. Interlocks must meet specific federal standards set by NHTSA. A motorist is required to blow into the device's mouthpiece to test their Breath Alcohol Concentration (BrAC) before starting their car. If the BrAC exceeds the state's limit, the vehicle will not start until alcohol is no longer detected in a breath sample. All breath test data is stored in the device and sent to the monitoring agency that ordered its installation, such as the courts, DMV or a probation officer.

Ignition interlocks are a cost-effective and innovative solution designed to keep our public roadways safe. At a cost of less than \$3 per day, paid for by the offender, interlocks provide a safety blanket for the cost of a cup of coffee while freeing up law enforcement to pursue other crimes.

The supporters of ignition interlocks are a who's who in traffic safety – MADD, AAA,

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, American Trauma Society, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Governors Highway Safety Association, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, International Association of Chiefs of Police, National Safety Council and the National Transportation Safety Board.

Studies show that there are nearly 300,000 incidences of drunk driving every day¹, but fewer than 4,000 people are arrested. On top of that, it is estimated that first-time drunk driving offenders are serious offenders and drive drunk at least 80 times before they are finally arrested². Additionally, suspending driver's licenses won't keep him or her off the roads as 75% will drive unlicensed and uninsured³. Many convicted drunk drivers continue to drive because they have to in order to keep their jobs, take care of their families or continue with school. Ignition interlocks provide an opportunity for offenders to retain their driving privileges. In doing so, they can drive safely, and successfully get on with their lives.

The Coalition works with policy makers in every state to provide the latest, credible, factual information on ignition interlock devices. Our members are at the forefront of effective ignition interlock programs in every state to deploy this lifesaving technology. Over the last decade, ignition interlocks have stopped over 2.7 million attempts to drive drunk⁴.

This data proves ignition interlocks are a cost-effective and proven solution that reduces drunk driving recidivism to keep our nation's roads and highways safe for the millions of other motorists who share them. Imagine how many more drunk driving incidents could be prevented and lives saved if every state adopts all-offender interlock laws. We know ignition interlocks work and they are available today.

Our challenge is to get all fifty states to adopt first offender ignition interlock laws. Currently, thirty-two states have first offender laws on the books and we are working with the remaining eighteen states to pass first offender ignition interlock laws. Additionally, we stay in touch with those first offender states to advocate for improvements in their laws to get devices on the cars sooner. This includes an immediate reinstatement measure, where an offender can get an ignition interlock on their car the day after their drunk driving arrest, instead of waiting the sixty or

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Alcohol-Impaired Driving Among Adults — United States, 2012." *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. August 7, 2015 / 64(30);814-817. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6430a2.htm>

² Arrest data: Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Crime in the United States: 2014" <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2014/crime-in-the-u.s.-2014/tables/table-29>
Incidence data: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Alcohol-Impaired Driving Among Adults — United States, 2012." *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. August 7, 2015 / 64(30);814-817. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6430a2.htm>

³ (Peck, R.C., Wilson, R. J., and Sutton, L. 1995. "Driver license strategies for controlling the persistent DUI offender, Strategies for Dealing with the intent Drinking Driver." Transportation Research Board, Transportation Research Circular No. 437. Washington, D.C. National Research Council: 48-49 and Beck, KH, et al. "Effects of Ignition Interlock License Restrictions on Drivers with Multiple Alcohol Offenses: A Randomized Trial in Maryland." *American Journal of Public Health*, 89 vol. 11 (1999): 1696-1700.)

⁴ <https://www.madd.org/press-release/ignition-interlocks-prevented-354372-drunk-driving-attempts-in-2017/>

ninety days until their court date. We are also continuing to improve the ways our devices report on driver behavior when using the ignition interlock, including the use of cameras, and other advanced technologies.

We work with NHTSA to make sure their directives to the states on ignition interlock laws are clear. Currently, states that pass first offender ignition interlock laws are to be awarded an incentive grant. However, those directives are needlessly complicated and inflexible. As a result, only seven of the thirty-two states with first offender laws have even qualified for the grant money. Our coalition is working with the committees of jurisdiction in the House and Senate to improve the terms of the grant program and perhaps increase the dollar amount of the grants going to the states. The legislative vehicle will be the reauthorization of the highway bill, currently known as the FAST ACT.

Another issue that Congress should address in the next authorization is the decline in alcohol-related arrests over the past decade. As a society, we have asked our law enforcement partners to shoulder much more responsibility than ever before. They are our greatest partners in this fight to drive down traffic fatalities. Although this is outside this committee's jurisdiction, Congress should consider adopting a new incentive grant program specifically for law enforcement activities.

We recognize there are other technologies being developed and supported by many in the safety community. While these technologies hold promise, it is important to note that the only commercially available technology that exists today to prevent an impaired driver from starting their vehicle is the ignition interlock. Technology will continue to evolve, including in the interlock industry. As a safety community, we must be prepared to adapt to emerging technologies. However, until they are ready to be deployed, we can't forget what has already been proven to work and will likely be the only technology available to prevent drunk driving for the foreseeable future.

So, as we battle this epidemic, it's important for lawmakers to remember that it's appropriate to punish offenders for their crimes because drunk driving is a crime. But I believe it's equally if not more important to make sure that we're protecting the public and the innocent people who are driving on the same roads as drunk driving offenders. If they're still going to drive, either legally or illegally, we have a sacred duty to protect the public with the best available technology.