



Jesse White
SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE

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White Gains Support For Measures Targeting Drunk Drivers

SPRINGFIELD — Secretary of State Jesse White announced today that he has gained key support and reached an unprecedented agreement between anti-drunk driving advocacy groups, law enforcement officials and the alcohol beverage industry for his comprehensive traffic safety proposal aimed at drunk drivers and drivers without valid licenses.

"The proposal I announced on Labor Day targeted the most dangerous and irresponsible drivers on our roads," said White. "Since then, we have built a remarkable level of support for this legislation.

"We all support highway safety. This legislation penalizes those people who get behind the wheel at double the legal limit, drive drunk with a child in the car or continue to drive after their license has been taken away. Working together, we will make Illinois law a model for the nation."

The key components of White's legislation would:

- Increase penalties, including mandatory jail sentences, for persons driving under the extreme influence of alcohol and habitual DUI offenders. The increased penalties would kick in for anyone caught driving at twice the legal limit, .16 BAC, or higher. According to the National Transportation Safety Board, repeat DUI offenders and drivers with a BAC of .15 or greater constitute less than one percent of all drivers on the road, but account for 27 percent of drivers in fatal crashes.

- Increase penalties for persons convicted of driving drunk with a child under the age of 16 in the vehicle. Between 1985 and 1996, more than 3,500 children under the age of 15 were killed and 58,000 children were injured in the United States while riding with a drunk driver.
- Expand the use of Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock Devices (BAIID) as a condition of restricted driving permits for anyone with two or more DUI incidents in a 10 year period or anyone with 2 or more convictions at .16 BAC or higher.
- Increase penalties, including mandatory jail sentences, for anyone caught driving on a suspended or revoked driver's license. Nearly 75,000 drivers were arrested for driving on a suspended or revoked license in 1998.
- Give judges the authority to immobilize the vehicles of persons caught driving on a suspended or revoked license by seizing the license plates or installing a boot device.

According to White, proponents of his plan include Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), the Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists (AAIM), the Illinois Sheriffs' Association, the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police, the Illinois State Bar Association, the Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association, the Illinois Licensed Beverage Association, the Associated Beer Distributors of Illinois, Romano Brothers, United Distillers and Vintners, the Illinois Restaurant Association, the National Transportation Safety Board, The Century Council, Anheuser-Busch Brewing Company, Miller Brewing Company and Coors Brewing Company.

House Bills 2265 and 2266 are being sponsored by State Representatives Jim Brosnahan (D-Evergreen Park), Jay Hoffman (D-Collinsville), John Fritchey (D-Chicago) and Terry Parke (R-Hoffman Estates).