

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

My name is Chase Glasser, I am a member of the board of directors of SAFE, an organization seeking to expand access to lifesaving technology that stops impaired driving. Thank you for the opportunity to detail our support for House Bill 37 and provide critical facts on the importance of expanding access to proven lifesaving technology, such as an ignition interlock device (IID), that prevents impaired driving. HB 37 will improve the safety of Ohio's roads.

HB 37 will increase accountability for an offender that operates a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or a combination of the two (OVI).¹ Currently, 35 states require interlocks on a first offense; this bill does not. Rather, by applying the interlock requirement ONLY to repeat offenders and drivers who previously pled a DWI arrest down to a "Reckless Operation" charge, HB 37 targets those with a demonstrated history of impaired driving, with additional measures reserved for the discretion of the judge. Additionally, HB 37 rectifies the common misconception that interlocks are required for second offenses in Ohio, by mandating their use in such cases.²

Under HB 37, the application of ignition interlock for repeat offenders will be the most proven and effective tool to prevent impaired driving. Research indicates people who drive drunk will do so 80+ times before being caught.³ Per the Ohio State Highway Patrol OVI Dashboard, of the 101,299 OVI arrests from 2019 to present, 30% are repeat offenders.⁴ License suspension alone is not an effective deterrent, as up to 70% of drivers continue to drive on a suspended license.⁵

This bill would ensure use of a required ignition interlock device, to prevent people with high rates of recidivism from driving impaired. The effectiveness of such devices is backed up by a bevy of academic literature. The CDC found that repeat offenses fell by 70% when interlocks are installed.⁶ The Institute for Highway Safety correlated stronger interlock laws with reduced instances of impaired drivers and fewer crashes, and a University of Pennsylvania study showed interlocks dramatically reduced instances of fatal crashes.^{7 8}

Ignition interlock devices (IID) control the operation of the vehicle's ignition. The vehicle driver will blow into a mouthpiece to test their breath alcohol level. They can start the vehicle and drive if they pass the state-specific Blood Alcohol Content or Concentration level. In Ohio, the preset start-up is 0.025 Blood Alcohol Content or Concentration (BAC). Alternatively, if the device detects alcohol above the state BAC requirement, the vehicle will not start.

Modern ignition interlock devices are highly accurate and reliable. This is due to the fuel cell method of alcohol detection, which is used in today's devices. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

¹ [download \(ohio.gov\)](#)

² [download \(ohio.gov\)](#)

³ [Vital Signs: Alcohol-Impaired Driving Among Adults --- United States, 2010 \(cdc.gov\)](#)

⁴ <https://statepatrol.ohio.gov/dashboards-statistics/ostats-dashboards/ovi-dashboard>

⁵ [2021-Ignition-Interlock-Report-FINAL-COPY.pdf \(madd.org\)](#)

⁶ [Increasing Alcohol Ignition Interlock Use | Transportation Safety | Injury Center | CDC](#)

⁷ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15389588.2021.1984439>

⁸ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26985604/>

(NHTSA) has established standards for all ignition interlock devices, and independent laboratories test the devices to ensure they meet NHTSA's strict requirements. All IIDs must be approved by NHTSA and calibrated for accuracy. Additionally, Ohio has specific regulations to ensure certain standards are met.⁹ Interlocks allow offenders to either regain or maintain their legal driving status. This ability to continue driving may be crucial in allowing them to retain employment and support their families, as well as manage family-related and court-ordered responsibilities that may require driving.

Ignition interlock devices are a cost-effective alternative to the significant societal costs and impacts of impaired driving. In Ohio, the average cost of an interlock device is between \$2.50-\$3.50 per day. Interlocks are highly accessible, with over half a dozen operating certified companies in Ohio.¹⁰ There are over 150 service/installations centers throughout Ohio, with broad availability to both urban and rural populations.¹¹ These locally owned service centers are small businesses that do oil changes, stereo installations, or auto shops. Financial assistance for interlock devices is also offered in Ohio, though it is at the discretion of the court, on a case-by-case basis.¹²

Ignition interlocks devices are strongly supported by the National Transportation Safety Board, National Safety Council, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Centers for Disease Control, National Conference of State Legislators, Governors Highway Safety Association, and the International Association Chiefs of Police Highway Safety Committee.¹³ Today's interlocks hold calibration longer than earlier models, advanced anti-tampering platforms, including GPS tracking of violations, and cameras to ensure the validity of breath samples. In Ohio, cameras have been required on interlocks since 2020. Laws requiring an ignition interlock for repeat and high-BAC offenders were associated with 20% fewer alcohol-impaired drivers in fatal crashes compared with no law during 2001–2019.¹⁴

There is also an acute need for this technology in Ohio. According to the Ohio State Highway Patrol OVI Dashboard, 72,293 OVI-related crashes have occurred on Ohio roadways since 2019. From 2019 to the present, these crashes have resulted in 3,595 deaths (53% of all motor vehicles deaths) and more than 37,000 injuries (8% of injuries).¹⁵ From 2006 to 2023 in Ohio, interlocks stopped 46,737 attempts to drive drunk with a BAC over .08, including 3,582 attempts in 2023 alone.

In light of the recent tragedies that led Governor DeWine to declare December Impaired Driving Prevention Month, improving traffic safety has never been more critical. To help make Ohio's roads safer, reduce instances of impaired driving, and provide offenders with a reliable tool that will improve driving habits and change dangerous behavior, we strongly urge a vote in favor of HB 37.

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson and distinguished members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to testify in strong support of House Bill 37 and would be happy to answer any questions you may have on this life saving legislation.

⁹ [Chapter 4501-45 - Ohio Administrative Code | Ohio Laws](#)

¹⁰ [Approved Service Centers | Ohio Traffic Safety Office](#)

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² : <https://otso.ohio.gov/programs/interlock-devices/welcome>

¹³ [State Ignition Interlock Laws \(ncsl.org\)](#)

¹⁴ [Increasing Alcohol Ignition Interlock Use | Transportation Safety | Injury Center | CDC](#)

¹⁵ [Slide 1](#) (2023 December Traffic Safety Bulletin) (In July 2024 Traffic Safety Bulletin, there were more than 22,000 injuries and 2,171 deaths (56% of motor vehicle deaths) from more than 36,000 alcohol or drug related crashes between 2021 and 2023. [Slide 1](#))

