

HB 37 Proponent Testimony
House Criminal Justice Committee
April 9, 2024

Chairwoman Abrams, Vice Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee: my name is Chase Glasser, and I am a member of the Board of Directors of SAFE, which seeks to expand access to proven lifesaving technology, such as an ignition interlock device (IID), that prevents impaired driving. On behalf of SAFE, I thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony on House Bill 37 (HB 37), which will expand Ohioans' access to lifesaving ignition interlock technology and 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 Additionally, HB 37 rectifies the common misconception that interlocks are required for second offenses in Ohio, by mandating their use in such cases.²

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.

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 more than 91,872 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 using 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 Institute for Highway Safety correlated stronger interlock laws with reduced instances of impaired drivers and fewer crashes, a University of Pennsylvania study showed interlocks dramatically reduced instances of fatal crashes, and the National Council of State Legislators endorsed interlock use for safer roads.^{6 7 8}

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 (NHTSA) has established standards for all ignition interlock devices, and independent laboratories test

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

⁷ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26985604/>

⁸ [State Ignition Interlock Laws \(ncsl.org\)](#)

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 as well.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 to and from certain locations.

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 often venues 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 and Safety Board, National Safety Council, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Centers for Disease Control, Governors Highway Safety Association, and the International Association Chiefs of Police Highway Safety Committee. 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 2001–2019.¹³

There is also an acute need for this technology in Ohio. According to the Ohio State Highway Patrol OVI Dashboard, 65,407 OVI-related crashes have occurred on Ohio roadways since 2019. These crashes have resulted in 3,225 deaths (53% of all motor vehicles deaths) and more than 37,000 injuries (8% of injuries).¹⁴ From 2006 to 2020 in Ohio, interlocks stopped 34,927 attempts to drive drunk with a BAC over .08, including 4,438 attempts in 2020.

Ignition interlocks are the most proven technology to reduce instances of driving while intoxicated, repeat offenses fell by 70% when installed.¹⁵ **To help make Ohio's roads safer, to reduce instances of impaired driving, and to 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. Chairwoman Abrams, and members of the Criminal Justice Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 37 and am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.**

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

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

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² [Ignition Interlock Device Financial Assistance | Intoxalock](#)

¹³ [Increasing Alcohol Ignition Interlock Use | Transportation Safety | Injury Center | CDC](#)

¹⁴ <https://statepatrol.ohio.gov/dashboards-statistics/ostats-dashboards/ovi-dashboard>

¹⁵ [Increasing Alcohol Ignition Interlock Use | Transportation Safety | Injury Center | CDC](#)

