

**CAMPAIGN TO
ELIMINATE
DRUNK DRIVING**

To: President-Elect Barack Obama's DOT Transition Team
From: Laura Dean-Mooney, MADD National President
Date: December 15, 2008
RE: MADD Priorities for Department of Transportation

MADD congratulates President-elect Obama on his historic campaign victory in November. He has a proud record of leadership in the Illinois Senate as principal cosponsor of the primary belt law, booster seat law, and graduated licensing provisions. We sincerely appreciate the opportunity to provide input on MADD's priorities for the Department of Transportation. MADD's mission is to stop drunk driving, serve the victims of this violent crime, and prevent underage drinking.

Since MADD was founded in 1980, fatalities from drunk driving crashes have been reduced by over 40 percent. It is important to note, however, that progress on drunk driving began to slow in the late 1990's and now our nation is again tasked with developing new ways to reduce the nearly 13,000 fatalities occurring each year that involve a drunk driver.

In response to this challenge, MADD launched in 2006 the *Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving* which is leading the nation toward the goal of eliminating drunk driving fatalities and injuries. The four prongs of the campaign are:

- ◆ Support for high visibility law enforcement efforts,
- ◆ Requiring ignition interlocks for all convicted DUI offenders,
- ◆ Support for the voluntary development of passive, in-vehicle technology to not allow drunk drivers (over 0.08 BAC) to operate the vehicle.
- ◆ Strengthen grassroots support for the elimination of drunk driving.

MADD strongly encourages President-elect Obama's administration to fully support the *Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving* and has several recommendations on how to help further these goals.

It is important that, as the new Obama administration looks at transportation policy, it continue to support the twice yearly drunk driving paid ad crackdowns as well as the seat belt crackdown. The national paid ads work in concert with the active leadership of law enforcement and are proven effective in deterring drunk driving.

Further, MADD strongly recommends that the Obama administration support efforts to require that all convicted drunk drivers be mandated to receive an ignition interlock device in his or her vehicle. Currently eight states, including President-elect Obama's home state of Illinois, require all convicted drunk drivers to install the interlock device. As Congress looks to reauthorize SAFETEA-LU, MADD supports strong federal incentives for states that mandate interlocks for all offenders and requests that the new administration do so as well.



The Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) are nearing completion of the first year of a five year, \$10 million cooperative research program to develop effective in-vehicle technologies to prevent drunk driving. Such a system must be set to detect alcohol in drivers with a blood alcohol content of 0.08 or higher and not hassle sober drivers.

This new technology is the cornerstone of the *Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving* and will make the elimination of drunk driving possible. MADD respectfully requests the Obama administration strongly support the continuation of the cooperative research program.

Finally, MADD led the enactment of the 21 minimum drinking age law (21 law) in 1984 with overwhelming bipartisan support. It is one of the most scientifically studied public health laws in history. A new NHTSA report estimates that the 21 law has saved 4,441 lives over the past five years alone. President-Elect Obama gave clear support to the 21 law during the presidential campaign. Therefore, MADD respectfully requests that the Obama administration continue to show leadership in support of the 21 law.

Again, MADD congratulates President-elect Obama on his historic victory. Like President-elect Obama's historic campaign, there is another opportunity to make campaign history. The *Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving* is leading the nation towards the goal of ending drunk driving. MADD looks forward to working with President-elect Obama and the new administration to further progress to eliminate drunk driving.