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MAY 27 2011

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Senate of Pennsylvania

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TO: All Senators

FROM: Senator Jane C. Orie

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SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE IGNITION INTERLOCK DEVICE MONITORING &
USE FOR FIRST-TIME OFFENDERS

DATE: May 19, 2011

I plan on re-introducing legislation (Senate Bill 679 2007-2008 Session) that will strengthen the Commonwealth's Ignition Interlock Device program by ensuring compliance through the possibility of program extension and eliminating the opportunity for program avoidance. It will further expand the program to include first-time offenders, in accordance with the MADD campaign to end drunk driving, with the full support of the NHTSA.

Under current law, repeat DUI offenders are required to have their vehicles equipped with an Ignition Interlock Device which requires the driver to perform a breath test to ensure the absence of alcohol in his system. While this prevents the driver from driving while intoxicated, the individual may make infinite attempts at starting the vehicle while intoxicated, failing the test, but going unreported to authorities. This legislation will monitor the use of the Ignition Interlock Device, and in the case of repeated noncompliance with program rules, will extend the period of required use. This type of monitoring is currently employed by several states including Maryland, West Virginia and Delaware.

The legislation will further improve our DUI laws by also expanding the Ignition Interlock program to include first-time offenders. Multiple studies have concluded that these devices are very effective when applied to first-offenders, and states have seen a decrease in recidivism among interlocked first offenders. Our Commonwealth has made great strides in recent years to combat drunk driving and I hope that you will join in further ensuring the safety of Pennsylvania's roadways through this important legislation.

Should you wish to co-sponsor this legislation please contact Monica Armstrong at 787-6538 or by email at marmstrong@pasen.gov.