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MADD Awards Illinois with 5-Star Rating for Efforts to Combat Drunk Driving

Jesse White joined by MADD-Illinois Executive Director

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White was joined by Sam Canzoneri, state executive director of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)-Illinois, to highlight Illinois' top 5-Star rating by MADD-National for our state's efforts to combat drunk driving. White applauded MADD for its ongoing campaign to eliminate drunk driving. As part of that campaign, MADD released its 2014 national and state ratings report.

"I am pleased that MADD continues to recognize Illinois as a national leader in the fight against drunk driving," said White. "My top priority as Secretary of State is to make the roads of Illinois as safe as possible. To accomplish this goal, I have continued to fight for tougher DUI laws, while working to improve upon our state's Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock Device (BAIID) program."

"MADD Illinois is proud of our state's five star rating," said Sam Canzoneri, state executive director of MADD Illinois. "This feat truly shows an effective collaboration among the various agencies throughout the state. Secretary of State Jesse White, our State Legislature, Illinois Department of Transportation, law enforcement, and our State's Attorneys have all played prominent roles in this accomplishment."

In the 2014 national and state ratings report, MADD highlighted Illinois' continued refinement of the BAIID program as a key reason for the top 5-Star rating. MADD's rating system focused on states adopting a series of proven drunk driving countermeasures, including requiring BAIIDs for all convicted drunk drivers.

Illinois' BAIID program requires all first-time DUI offenders who wish to obtain driving relief to install a BAIID on their vehicles. Motorists are required to blow into the BAIID, which measures their blood alcohol content (BAC) levels. The device is designed to prevent DUI offenders from driving after having consumed alcohol. Last summer, White's office began requiring the installation of in-car cameras with every BAIID. Since then, more than 5,700 BAIIDs have been installed along with the in-car cameras in an effort to improve BAIID-user accountability.

"BAIID works because it prevents cars from being driven by drunk drivers," said White. "The in-car camera technology represents the most recent key upgrade to our successful program. But we will not grow complacent. We will continue to look at new ways to make a great program even better."

During the press conference, MADD also highlighted the importance of their statewide court monitoring efforts in Illinois. The program's goal seeks to gauge the consistency of sentencing drunk driving offenders in various county courts.

"I applaud MADD for their statewide court monitoring program," said White. "The courts play a key role in combating drunk driving, and MADD's efforts further underscore the importance of consistent sentencing of DUI offenders."

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