



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Representative Jim Ott and Senator Alberta Darling introduce Drunk Driving Bills

**“There is no excuse for driving under the influence.”**

Madison.....As the new session of the Legislature approaches, two Southeastern Wisconsin Legislators will again attempt to toughen Wisconsin’s drunk driving laws. In past sessions, Senator Darling and Representative Ott have successfully passed laws making fourth offense OWI in all cases and closed the ignition interlock loophole.

The proposed bills introduced today will bring back increasing mandatory minimum sentences for repeat drunk drivers and those convicted of homicide while driving intoxicated. An important new bill will make first offense a criminal misdemeanor and eliminated look-backs for second offense OWI.

“Wisconsin is the only state where first offense OWI is treated as a non-criminal offense, despite the fact that a significant number of OWI crashes involve someone with no prior offenses,” said Representative Ott. “This bill shows that Wisconsin is taking drunk driving seriously, while at the same time offering a second chance to those who do not reoffend within five years.”

Even though alcohol related crashes have decreased in recent years, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation reports that alcohol remains the single greatest contributing cause of fatal crashes.

“In this day and age, there is no excuse for driving under the influence,” Darling said, “I’m proud of our efforts to get people with drug and alcohol issues the additional help they need through initiatives like the Treatment, Alternative, and Diversion program. These bills strengthen our drunk driving laws but also gives people the chance to show they have made a positive change.”

The bills are as follows: LRB 1006/1: mandatory period of confinement for homicide by intoxicated use of a vehicle and providing a penalty. LRB 1007/1: penalties for offenses related to operating a vehicle while intoxicated and providing a penalty. LRB 1009/1: requiring persons accused of violating traffic laws and ordinances related to driving while intoxicated to appear in person in court. LRB 1025/1: committing a fifth or sixth offense related to operating a vehicle while intoxicated and providing a penalty.