

Contact:

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Rep. Jim Ott (608) 266-0486

Sen. Alberta Darling (608) 266-5830

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Representative Jim Ott & Senator Alberta Darling Introduce Tougher OWI Penalties  
Tavern League Lends its Support to the Bills

**Madison-** Representative Jim Ott (R-Mequon), Senator Alberta Darling (R-River Hills) and the Tavern League of Wisconsin have joined forces to increase penalties for repeat drunk drivers and those who kill someone while drunk driving, introducing common sense measures that will deter repeat offenders and ultimately save lives.

“Too many times I hear news reports of innocent people maimed or killed by OWI offenders,” said Rep. Jim Ott. “The bills are part of an ongoing effort to make penalties for impaired driving more in line with the seriousness of the offense.”

Sen. Alberta Darling says the bills will close loopholes and get dangerous drivers off the road.

“Last session, we made a significant investment in rehabilitation,” Darling said, “It’s our hope people get the help they need before they get their 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> OWI, but there comes a time when we have to get these dangerous drivers off the road.”

The two lawmakers are introducing three bills to combat drunk driving:

- LRB 1474: mandates at least five years of prison time for committing a homicide while OWI
- LRB 1384: mandates eighteen months confinement time for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> OWI offenders
- LRB 1368: closes a loophole for those required to have an ignition interlock but drive without one

“The Tavern League has always prioritized keeping our patrons safe,” said Pete Madland, Executive Director of the Tavern League of Wisconsin. “The Tavern League has seen enormous success with its SafeRide program, and we strongly support Representative Ott’s and Senator Darling’s package of bills that complement our efforts by going after the worst offenders who give everyone else a bad name.”

According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, in 2015 there were approximately 24,000 convictions for drunken driving offenses, 190 people killed and nearly 2,900 injured.

