

# Sen. Darling: Senate votes to close OWI loophole

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Madison, Wisconsin - Ignition interlocks can be an effective tool in preventing drunk driving. Due to a loophole in state law, some drunk drivers are getting off the hook for driving without their court ordered ignition interlock.

On Tuesday, the Wisconsin State Senate unanimously voted to close that loophole. State Senator Alberta Darling (R-River Hills) says her bill allows judges to specify the date in which a convicted drunk driver's car must have an ignition interlock installed.

"Ignition interlocks save lives," Darling said, "They are like having a probation officer right there in the car."

Some convicted drunk drivers exploit the loophole by not installing an ignition interlock and driving before their license is reinstated. If that driver was pulled over by police, they can be charged with driving without a valid license, but not the more serious crime of driving without the court ordered ignition interlock. Driving without a court-ordered ignition interlock can lead to a hefty fine and/or up to six months in prison.

"Closing this loophole makes Wisconsin's roads much safer," Darling said, "Individuals who break the law should face the consequences of their actions, not skip the law because of a loophole."

[According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety](#), first-time OWI offenders who used ignition interlocks were less likely to be arrested again in the next two years for alcohol-impaired driving than those without interlocks in their vehicle. The bill unanimously now heads to Governor Walker's desk for final approval.

Senator Darling represents portions of Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington and Waukesha Counties.

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