

Assembly approves two drunk driving measures

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The Assembly today passed a pair of bills that stiffen penalties for drunken drivers.

AB 15 and 17 would require those charged with first-offense OWI to appear in court and would implement a presumptive mandatory minimum sentence of five years in prison for OWI homicide, respectively.

Rep. Jim Ott, R-Mequon, told reporters ahead of the floor session that he believed there was support for the measures in the Senate. He said he hopes to see it on the Senate calendar for a committee hearing in the fall.

Those two bills were part of a package of four OWI-related proposals introduced by Ott earlier in the session. All four proposals were scheduled for an exec before the panel a over month ago, but Chairman John Spiros, R-Marshfield, canceled the vote after a flurry of last-minute amendments left their passage in doubt.

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While both sides of the aisle reached compromise on AB 15 and 17, negotiations on AB 16 and 18 continue. In their original form, those measures would create a mandatory minimum prison sentence for those convicted of fifth and sixth-offense OWI and would make first-offense OWI a criminal misdemeanor rather than a civil violation.