

Gov. Evers: Announces initiatives to curb reckless driving, keep streets and communities safe

Posted on Friday, Feb 10, 2023

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today announced initiatives in his 2023-25 budget designed to combat reckless driving across the state, promote safer driving, and keep streets and communities safe. The governor's plan includes measures to help communities re-engineer roads to improve the safety of motorists, pedestrians, and other non-motorist users, expand opportunities for driver's education, increase State Patrol trooper and inspector positions, and strengthen reckless and drunk driving penalties.

Today's announcement comes as Gov. Evers also recently announced a plan to send 20 percent of the state's sales tax back to local communities for shared revenue, making approximately \$250 million available in public safety aid specifically to support law enforcement, fire, and EMS as well as courts and district attorneys' offices.

"It has to stop. Reckless driving on our roads is affecting Wisconsinites across our state, whether it's excessive speeding, running red lights, tailgating, operating under the influence, or other dangerous behavior," said Gov. Evers. "Folks should be able to feel safe in their homes, in our neighborhoods, and on our streets, roads, and highways. These initiatives will continue building on our work to keep our kids, our families, and our communities safe by taking a statewide, multi-pronged approach to urgently addressing reckless driving and dangerous behavior on our roads."

The governor's announcement today also builds on the more than \$100 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds Gov. Evers has invested in violence prevention and community safety initiatives, including \$3.5 million Gov. Evers directed to the city of Milwaukee last year specifically to prevent reckless driving.

Deadly crashes and risky driving behaviors have risen across the state and nation. According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), approximately 2,900 people are injured by reckless drivers every year in Wisconsin. Reckless driving can include driving behaviors such as speeding, improper lane changes, and inattentive, erratic, or negligent driving. In addition, nearly 20 percent of Wisconsin's licensed drivers have at least one conviction for operating while intoxicated.

Gov. Evers recognizes that Wisconsin needs a multi-pronged approach to keep communities safe. A list of the governor's proposed investments to reduce reckless driving and keep communities safe is available below:

Building Safer Communities

To increase safety for motorists, pedestrians, and other non-motorist users, Gov. Evers is proposing investments to allow communities to improve the physical design of their roads in innovative ways, including:

- Providing \$60 million over the biennium for traffic calming grants to construct traffic circles, pedestrian islands, bump-outs at crosswalks, and other treatments that slow vehicle traffic, making conditions safer for bikers and pedestrians; and
- Restoring roadway design considerations in state law that support non-motorist infrastructure known as complete streets, empowering local communities to safely integrate all modes of transportation.

Driver's Education and Licensure

Gov. Evers is proposing to support community safety by increasing driver education and licensure by:

- Implementing Driver's Licenses for All, regardless of documented status, to improve the safety of Wisconsin roads for everyone in Wisconsin; and
- Investing \$6.5 million to cover the cost of comprehensive driver education for economically disadvantaged students, ensuring that teens have exposure to the foundations of safe driving practices regardless of their family's income.

Increasing Penalties for Reckless Driving

Gov. Evers has made addressing mental and behavioral health needs statewide a key priority in his 2023-25 biennial budget, including investments targeted at addressing alcohol and substance misuse. In addition to these efforts, Gov. Evers is proposing to strengthen penalties for violating Wisconsin's drunk driving and seatbelt laws and increase highway enforcement through the following proposals:

- Requiring that courts order the use of an ignition interlock device (IID) for all offenses involving the use of alcohol and operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated (OWI), joining 30 other states and D.C. in requiring all offenders, including first-time offenders, to install an IID;
- Improving the safety of travel on Wisconsin's highways by providing 35.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions for additional state troopers and 10.0 FTE positions for motor carrier inspectors; and
- Increasing Wisconsin's seatbelt violation penalty from \$10 to \$25 to match neighboring states.

An online version of this release is available [here](#).