

# Gov. Evers: Signs bipartisan bill to reduce reckless driving, improve road safety by expanding access to driver education

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today signed Assembly Bill 394, now 2023 Wisconsin Act 86, a bipartisan bill aimed at reducing reckless driving and improving road safety by expanding access to driver education. Funded by the \$6 million set aside in the governor's 2023-25 biennial budget, this grant program builds upon the work of Gov. Evers and the Evers Administration to improve safety on Wisconsin roads and address the rising concern of reckless driving statewide. 2023 Wisconsin Act 86 establishes a driver education grant program under the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) to help pay the costs of driver education courses for certain low-income students, helping to remove financial barriers for those who may not otherwise take driver education courses.

“Ensuring young drivers have access to the resources and education they need to gain experience and learn to drive safely is critically important for the safety of our roads and the well-being of communities across our state,” said Gov. Evers. “As we continue working to address reckless driving statewide, I’m grateful improving driving and road safety is an issue garnering bipartisan attention through support for driver education programs that do good work each and every day to make sure we have safe, responsible drivers on our roads.”

The governor's announcement today builds upon Gov. Evers' and the Evers Administration's ongoing efforts to prevent reckless driving and improve road safety. Gov. Evers has directed over \$100 million toward violence prevention and community safety initiatives, including \$3.5 million for the city of Milwaukee last

year alone specifically to prevent reckless driving. Gov. Evers has similarly taken additional steps aimed at curbing reckless driving and promoting safer driving in Wisconsin, including signing [Senate Bill 92](#), which was the first bill enacted in the governor's second term. Now 2023 Wisconsin Act 1, Senate Bill 92 allowed counties and municipalities to enact ordinances authorizing law enforcement to impound a vehicle if its owner is cited for reckless driving, has a prior conviction for reckless driving, and has not paid the imposed forfeiture for that offense. Additionally, Gov. Evers also [signed](#) two additional bills during this legislative session to help address reckless driving and carjacking in the state by increasing penalties for both and creating a new "carjacking" section of the criminal code.

Finally, Gov. Evers also [proposed](#) several investments as part of his 2023-25 biennial budget proposal to reduce reckless driving and keep communities safe, including:

### **Building Safer Communities**

To increase safety for motorists, pedestrians, and other non-motorist users, Gov. Evers proposed 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 proposed 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 also proposed 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), more than 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.

While the final 2023-25 budget provided the \$6 million for the driver education program being signed into law today, \$16,000 to develop and implement electric vehicle license plate stickers to assist first responders in emergency response for electric vehicles, and three additional positions for motor carrier inspectors in the Wisconsin State

Patrol, the vast majority of the governor's provisions to address reckless driving were removed by Republican lawmakers during the budget process.

[Assembly Bill 394](#), now 2023 Wisconsin Act 86:

- Creates a driver education grant program to pay the costs of driver education courses for certain low-income eligible students at approved driver education providers.

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