

Rep. Spiros: Assembly advances two Representative Spiros' Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) bills

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Madison, WI— Representative John Spiros (R-Marshfield) received strong support with the unanimous passage of two bills, Senate Bill 248 and Assembly Bill 856, in the State Assembly.

Senate Bill (SB) 248 strengthens OWI laws by creating a compliance-based removal system for interlock ignition devices (IIDs). This is a proven national best practice recommended by NHTSA and AAMVA and used in over 30 states. The bill also creates strict penalties for individuals who attempt to drive while intoxicated, tamper with or bypass these devices. In addition, SB 248 eliminates the waiting period for an individual to apply for an occupational license but an IID must be installed first.

“Every year in Wisconsin, hundreds of families lose loved ones to drunk driving crashes – tragedies that are entirely preventable”, Representative Spiros said. “IIDs are one of the most effective counter measure tools to *prevent* drunk driving accidents and deaths. IIDs significantly reduce repeat drunk driving, cutting recidivism by roughly 65-70% while installed.”

Assembly Bill (AB) 856 repeals unconstitutional OWI provisions within the current statutes. The bill brings Wisconsin’s OWI statutes into constitutional compliance by repealing and updating provisions that had been struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court and Wisconsin Supreme Court, including implied consent and incapacitated-driver provisions.

“AB 856 will strengthen OWI prosecutions and prevent cases from being dismissed

or jeopardized and not allow violators to get off free because our laws need to be updated,” commented Spiros. “These two commonsense measures will make Wisconsin’s roads safer and save lives.”

Senate Bill (SB) 248 will be sent to the Governor to be signed into law. Assembly Bill (AB) 856 awaits approval in the Wisconsin State Senate. AB 258 is supported by AAA Wisconsin, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and the SAFE Coalition. AB 856 is supported by the WI Chiefs of Police Association, WI Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association, WI Professional Police Association, and others.