

House Republican Press Release

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REP. FREY PUSHES GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO TOUGHEN DRUNK DRIVING LAWS



State Representatives John Frey (R- Ridgefield) announced he is co-sponsoring legislation that will strengthen administrative and criminal penalties for operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol.

The legislation SB-409, An Act Concerning the Enforcement of Drunk Driving includes increased penalties for a convicted drunk driver and also authorizes the state of Connecticut to sell the driver's motor vehicle. The bill is currently before the General Assembly's Judiciary Committee after getting unanimous support in the Public Safety and Security Committee. Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) has also announced their support for the proposal.

Rep. Frey said, "The 40% decline in alcohol related traffic fatalities since 1984 has been achieved primarily through the enactment and enforcement of tough driving laws," said Rep. Frey. "Unfortunately, that progress has stalled in recent years and it is time to strengthen, reform, and intensify enforcement and sanctions with this legislation."

In Connecticut, despite the efforts of police and advocates like MADD, current state law has not persuaded drivers to separate drinking alcohol from driving a motor vehicle. According to MADD officials, there were 120 deaths last year because of drunk drivers. Connecticut is among the 15 worst states in the nation in terms of drunk-driving related fatalities.

Representative Frey is an ardent advocate for eliminating drunk drivers from the road. Representative Frey, in 1999, voted to increase the penalty for a second and subsequent Driving under the influence (DUI) conviction and in 2002 he voted to lower the standard Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) from .10% to .08% BAC and eliminates the .07% standard for someone with a prior conviction making the standard uniform for all DUI offenses.

Below are the measures included in SB-409 to toughen the state's drunken driving laws:

Raise the fine for the first offense from \$500-\$1,000 to \$1,000-\$2,500.

Raise the fine for a second offense from \$1,000-\$4,000 to \$2,500-\$5,000.

Increase penalties for subsequent offenses to \$5,000-\$10,000; five years in prison with a mandatory two-year sentence and 300 hours community service, permanent revocation of the license and mandatory vehicle forfeiture.

Boost vehicle suspensions for non-criminal, administrative proceedings, up to 16 months for more than two offenses.

Increase the penalty for refusing to take a Breathalyzer test from six months to 240 days for a first offense, two years for a second.

Increase the penalty for conviction of second-degree manslaughter with a motor vehicle to Class B Felony, 1-20 years in jail and up to a \$15,000 fine, permanent license revocation and mandatory vehicle forfeiture.

Increase the penalty for conviction of second-degree assault with a vehicle to a Class C Felony, 1-10 years in jail, fine up to \$10,000 and discretionary authority for forfeiture of the vehicle.

Rep. Frey said, “Despite the continued efforts of law enforcement agencies, an average of one person is killed every 31 minutes and one is injured approximately every minute in an alcohol-related traffic crash. Unfortunately, we have experienced too many tragic losses in Ridgefield due to drunk driving. There cannot be enough officers on the road to stop every drunk driver, so proven effective laws, initiatives, and technologies all play a critical role in eliminating drunk driving.”

Rep. Frey, House Republican Whip, serves the 111th Assembly District of Ridgefield in the state House of Representatives.