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NEW LAW TARGETS REPEAT DRUNK DRIVERS IN VIRGINIA

JULY 1ST LAW MANDATES ONE-YEAR JAIL SENTENCES FOR TARGETED REPEAT DUI OFFENDERS

Richmond, VA, June 21 – Certain persons repeatedly convicted of driving under the influence (DUI) of alcohol in Virginia – including while boating -- will be guilty of a Class 6 felony and sentenced to a mandatory one-year jail sentence and a minimum fine of \$ 1,000 once the Commonwealth's newest DUI law goes into effect on July 1, 2013.

Specifically, persons convicted of DUI in Virginia and who had a prior conviction of: a third or subsequent DUI ([18.2-266](#)); DUI maiming ([18.2-51.4](#)); involuntary manslaughter DUI ([18.2-36.1](#)); BUI (boating under the influence) maiming ([18.2-51.5](#)); or involuntary manslaughter BUI ([18.2-36.2](#)) will now be guilty of a felony subject to a "mandatory minimum term of imprisonment of one year and a mandatory minimum fine of \$ 1,000" ([18.2-270](#)).

"As repeat drunk drivers are overrepresented in fatal crashes where alcohol was a factor and that DUI convictions are actually on the rise in Virginia, this new law is both welcomed and necessary," said Kurt Gregory Erickson, President and registered Virginia lobbyist of the nonprofit and Vienna-based Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP).

Next month's new Virginia DUI law was borne out of 2013 Virginia General Assembly legislation sponsored by both Senator Thomas Norment (R-Williamsburg) ([SB 1272](#)) and Delegate Rick Morris (R-Carrollton) ([HB 1559](#)). Both bills were unanimously passed by Virginia Assembly members.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, alcohol-impaired drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes were seven-times more likely to have a prior DUI conviction than were sober drivers.ⁱ In addition and in making a number of recommendations to further combat DUI in the U.S., the National Transportation Safety Board last month specifically recommended the targeting of repeat drunk drivers via "effective new approaches" to counter the "undue risk" posed by these drivers.ⁱⁱ

Virginia Department of Motor Vehicle figures released just this month show that 229 persons were killed in alcohol-related traffic crashes in the Commonwealth in 2012 representing nearly 30-percent (29.5%) of all highway fatalities in the state last year. In addition, 28,719 persons were convicted of DUI in Virginia last year – a nearly two-percent (1.98%) increase in such convictions from 2011.ⁱⁱⁱ

Founded in 1982, the non-profit and Virginia-based Washington Regional Alcohol Program is a three-time winner of Virginia's prestigious Governor's Transportation Safety Award as well project manager of the Commonwealth's statewide *Checkpoint Strikeforce* campaign. As a public-private partnership, WRAP works to prevent drunk driving and underage drinking in the Washington-metropolitan area including in Northern Virginia however the organization may best be known to area residents via its popular free cab ride service for would-be drunk drivers, SoberRide®.

For more information, visit WRAP's web site at **www.wrap.org**.

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ⁱ NHTSA's December 2012 Alcohol-Impaired Driving Traffic Safety Fact Sheet
<http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811700.pdf>

ⁱⁱ NTSB's May 2013 Safety Report: Reaching Zero: Actions to Eliminate Alcohol-Impaired Driving
<http://www.nts.gov/doclib/reports/2013/SR1301.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Virginia DMV's 2012 Virginia Traffic Crash Facts
http://www.dmv.virginia.gov/safety/crash_data/crash_facts/crash_facts_12.pdf