

**CONTACT:** Kurt Gregory Erickson  
President

**PHONE:** W. 703/893-0461  
CELL. 703/625-2303

**EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE UNTIL:  
May 19, 2009 @ 10:00 am/EST**

# **MARYLAND GOVERNOR SIGNS DUI AND UNDERAGE DRINKING BILLS**

## ***NEW LAWS TARGET REPEAT DRUNK DRIVERS AND TEEN DRINKERS IN THE STATE***

**Annapolis, MD, May 19** – In his final, ceremonial bill signing of 2009 Maryland General Assembly legislation, Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley (D) today signed into law bills cracking-down on both: persons repeatedly convicted of drunk driving; as well as underage drinkers in the state and those unlawfully providing them with alcohol.

Specifically, Governor O'Malley today signed into law 2009 Maryland General Assembly legislation which will:

- mandate one-year driver's license suspensions for persons twice convicted (within five years) of either driving under the influence of alcohol or controlled dangerous substances (**Senate Bill 262**);
- outlaw the "consumption" of alcohol by those under 21 and criminalize the provision of alcohol to those under 21 (**House Bill 299**);
- double the period for a subsequent Probation Before Judgment (PBJ) finding for impaired driving offenses (**House Bill 301 & Senate Bill 259**);
- and provide for fines and incarceration for persons violating a Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) imposed driver's license alcohol restriction (**House Bill 305 & Senate Bill 263**).

Today's signed legislation was originally introduced by O'Malley in January and was borne out of the recommendations made by the Maryland General Assembly-created Task Force to Combat Driving Under the Influence of Drugs and Alcohol (of which WRAP served as a gubernatorial-appointed member).

*(more)*

**“While it’s unfortunate that Maryland lawmakers discounted if not dismissed the legislative recommendations made by the very task force they asked for said recommendations, Governor O’Malley should be commended for his leadership on this public health and public safety issue,”** said Kurt Gregory Erickson, President of the Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), registered Maryland lobbyist and a proponent of the DUI task force bills.

Erickson refers to Maryland anti-drunk driving advocates’ bemoaning of the final outcome of this year’s Administration / DUI task force bills as only two of the five bills introduced by O’Malley made it through this year’s session of Maryland’s General Assembly fairly unscathed (that being the PBJ [HB 301 / SB 259] and MVA-imposed restricted license bills [HB 305 & SB 263]) with two others weakened, according to advocates, and one never making it out of committee.

The weakened bills included both the underage drinking [HB 299] and repeat DUI offender bills [SB 262]. The underage drinking bill originally proposed driver’s sanctions for teens convicted of either possession or consumption of alcohol. Such advocates-supported penalties were stripped from the bill early in the session. In addition, an amendment made to the bill by Senator Robert Zirkin (D-Baltimore County) narrowed the ability to enforce the consumption provisions of the bill by limiting its charge to only those also specifically “observed in possession of an alcoholic beverage.” The repeat offender bill, which and in its current form only applies to those twice convicted of Maryland’s driving under the influence of alcohol (.08 + blood alcohol concentration [BAC]) or “controlled dangerous substances” statutes, originally sought to also apply enhanced penalties to persons repeatedly convicted of driving while impaired by either alcohol (.07 BAC) or drugs.

A pair of bills [HB 307 & SB 260] also introduced by O’Malley and stemming from Maryland’s DUI task force and which requested BAC tests for drivers involved in fatal or life-threatening motor vehicle crashes was killed in committee earlier this year.

Founded in 1982, the Maryland non-profit Washington Regional Alcohol Program is an award-winning public-private partnership working to prevent drunk driving and underage drinking in the Washington-metropolitan area including in Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties. In addition to WRAP serving as project manager of Maryland’s *Checkpoint Strikeforce* campaign – and through public education, innovative health education programs and advocacy -- WRAP is credited with keeping the metro-Washington area’s alcohol-related traffic deaths consistently lower than the national average. WRAP, however, may best be known to area residents via the organization’s popular free cab ride service for would-be drunk drivers, *SoberRide*. For more information, visit WRAP’s web site at [www.wrap.org](http://www.wrap.org).

► The full report of Maryland’s Task Force to Combat Driving Under the Influence of Drugs & Alcohol can be found online here: <http://wrap.org/pdfs/FinalTFReportssubmitted102908.pdf> .

► In addition, the Maryland Impaired Driving Coalition’s official news release on this year’s DUI Task Force / Administration bills can be found online here: [http://www.wrap.org/pdfs/09legisMDidc\\_prApril14.pdf](http://www.wrap.org/pdfs/09legisMDidc_prApril14.pdf)