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TOUGH NEW DUI LAWS IN **EFFECT IN D.C. NEXT WEEK**

AUGUST 1ST LAW INCREASES PENALTIES FOR DRUNK DRIVING WHILE MANDATING JAIL FOR DUI WITH A MINOR IN THE CAR

Washington, D.C., July 25 – Effective next Wednesday, persons convicted of driving under the influence (DUI) in the District of Columbia will face the potential of increased fines, increased jail sentences and mandatory incarceration if convicted of DUI with a child in the car.

Specifically – and as a result of emergency legislation (B19-777) unanimously passed by the Council of the District of Columbia on July 10th – a new D.C. law going into effect on August 1, 2012 increases the maximum fines and incarceration periods for all persons convicted of DUI in the District; doubles the mandatory-minimum jail sentences (from five to ten days) for convicted high-blood alcohol concentration (BAC) offenders (.20+ BAC); and creates a minimum five-day jail sentence for persons convicted of DUI whilst transporting a minor.

“With more than a quarter of the District’s traffic deaths being caused by drunk drivers, these are necessary if not lifesaving new laws,” said Kurt Gregory Erickson, President of the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) and whom testified in support of B19-777 before the city Council on June 8th.

According to Metropolitan Washington Council of Government (COG) figures*, 28-percent of all traffic fatalities occurring in the District of Columbia in 2010 were alcohol-related. That same year, COG figures show that while arrests are down for DUI in the Washington-metropolitan area as a whole, they’re actually up in the District of Columbia and that alcohol-related traffic crashes in D.C. increased by over 32-percent (32.59%) from the previous year.

In 2010, 1,648 persons were arrested for DUI in the District of Columbia*.

The District’s newest drunk driving law will increase maximum fines for a DUI from \$ 300 and 90 days in jail to \$ 1,000 and 180 days in jail. The new law will also

double the minimum mandatory incarceration period for persons convicted of driving with a BAC level of .20 or greater from five to ten days jail time. Also facing a newly-installed minimum mandatory incarceration sentence of five days in jail will be persons convicted of DUI with a minor in the vehicle.

Via the passage of B19-777, next Wednesday will also see the District of Columbia enacting, for the first time, BAC limits for commercial vehicle operators in the District (.04 BAC) and places oversight of the city's breathalyzer program with the District's independent forensic agency, the Chief Medical Examiner's office, thereby paving the way for the reinstallation of the city's dormant DUI breath-testing program.

Commemorating its 30th year in 2012, the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program is an award-winning public-private partnership working to prevent drunk driving and underage drinking. 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**.

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* Source:

WRAP's 2011 "How Safe are Our Roads?" report (prepared by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments): **<http://www.wrap.org/highwaysafety11.pdf>**