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TOUGH NEW DUI LAW IN MARYLAND **GOES INTO EFFECT THIS WEDNESDAY**

MEASURE CRACKS-DOWN ON DUI OFFENDERS WITH CHILDREN IN THE CAR

Annapolis, MD, Sept. 29 – Effective this Wednesday, persons in Maryland convicted of alcohol-impaired driving while also transporting a child face stiff new penalties most notably the mandatory imposition of ignition interlock devices on their vehicles.

Passed by Maryland's General Assembly earlier this year and signed into law by Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley (D) in May, House Bill 1015 (sponsored by Delegate Sam Arora, D-Montgomery County) becomes law on October 1st and expands Maryland's current universe of offenders subject to ignition interlock devices to include persons convicted of drunk driving while also transporting a minor [21-902(A)(3) or (B)(2)].

The measure, introduced for the third consecutive year in Annapolis this year, passed both Maryland's House of Delegates and Senate receiving unanimous votes in each chamber.

“On average, someone in Maryland is arrested every 19 hours for impaired driving while also transporting a minor,” said Kurt Gregory Erickson, President of the Maryland nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), registered Maryland lobbyist and proponent of HB 1015. ***“Maryland's newest DUI law will address both this egregious crime and the fact that such unlawful actions are on the rise in Maryland.”***

The University of Maryland's National Study Center for Trauma and Emergency Medical Systems cited that Maryland recorded 465 arrests in 2012 for driving while impaired by alcohol and or drugs while also transporting a minor. The National Study Center's findings also conclude that the crime of DUI [21-902(A)] in Maryland whilst transporting a minor is on the rise as citations for such have increased by double digit figures (20.94%) between 2009 and 2012.

In 2011, Maryland's General Assembly passed legislation, now Maryland law, requiring the installation of in-car breathalyzers otherwise known as ignition interlock devices for a minimum of six months for persons in the state convicted of either: drunk driving with a .15 or higher BAC level; twice convicted of drunk driving within five years; or convicted of drunk driving while under the age of 21 years.

Wednesday's enacted new law will add to that universe of persons subject to Maryland's interlock requirements persons convicted of driving either "under the influence of alcohol" (21-901[a]) or "while impaired by alcohol" (21-902[b]) while also transporting a person under 16 years of age.

"Maryland law already requires this proven effective technology for persons deemed willful or wanton via their conscious disregard for the rights and safety of others," said Erickson. ***"This new law looks to simply include a growing population of equally egregious DUI offenders currently escaping Maryland's newest drunk driving sanction."***

Founded in 1982, the Maryland nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program is an award-winning public-private partnership working to prevent drunk driving and underage drinking in the Washington-metropolitan area. 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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