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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 13, 2014

MARYLAND LAWMAKERS ADVANCE
BILL CRACKING-DOWN ON DUI OFFENDERS
WITH CHILDREN IN CAR

*MEASURE LOOKS TO SUBJECT INCREASING NUMBER
OF OFFENDERS TO IN-CAR BREATHALYZERS*

Annapolis, MD, March 13 – Maryland lawmakers have given preliminary approval to a bill penalizing the state's increasing number of persons convicted of alcohol-impaired driving while transporting a child with the mandatory installation of ignition interlocks in the offenders' motor vehicles.

House Bill 1015, introduced for the third consecutive year by Delegate Sam Arora (D-Montgomery County), received its preliminary nod from Maryland's key House of Delegates' Judiciary Committee last night in Annapolis and currently advanced on its second of three readings in the state's full House of Delegates today.

“On average, someone in Maryland is arrested every 19 hours for driving while impaired by alcohol and or drugs 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. ***“House Bill 1015 both addresses this egregious crime while simultaneously addressing 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 (data attached).

The National Study Center's findings also conclude that the crime of DUI (21-902a) 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.

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

House Bill 1015 is currently before Maryland's full House of Delegates for their consideration likely this week.

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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