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MADD, Rep. Hammoud Call for .05 BAC Law, Ignition Interlocks for All Offenders

Legislation Is MADD's First Endorsement of Lowering BAC to .05

LANSING — Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) today joined Michigan Representative Abdullah Hammoud and traffic safety partners in calling for a state law that lowers the threshold for impaired driving in Michigan to .05 blood alcohol concentration (BAC). MADD also strongly supports Representative Hammoud's legislation that would require ignition interlocks for all drunk drivers, which would make Michigan the 34th state with an all-offender ignition interlock law.

Today's announcement marks the first time MADD has advocated for lowering a state's BAC law.

"Today, we are proud to stand with Michigan to support this proposal that research shows will save lives," said MADD National President Helen Witty, whose 16-year-old daughter Helen Marie was killed by a drunk and marijuana-impaired driver while rollerblading on a bike path. "Research shows that critical driving skills are impaired at .05 BAC, significantly increasing the risk of a horrible, 100 percent preventable crash. We want to do anything we can to support states that are trying to stop these tragedies and keep drunk drivers off the road."

Representative Hammoud has filed legislation that would set Michigan's impairment level at .05 BAC. If passed, Michigan would become the second state to lower the legal threshold for drunk driving.

"We must address drunk driving, which is a completely avoidable epidemic," said Representative Hammoud. "As a former public health professional, I am motivated by facts and statistics, and as a legislator I know our current policies in place to prevent drunk driving are not working, which is why we must do more. The loss of the Abbas family, a beautiful family of five, due to a drunk driver, has further motivated a community of advocates to step up and propose real solutions backed up by the scientific community. These critical proposals will do more to prevent drinking and driving, and ultimately save lives."

In December, Utah became the first state in the nation with a .05 BAC law. In addition to Michigan, proposals in Oregon, New York and California are being considered this year. MADD is not seeking a national .05 BAC standard at this time, but will support .05 BAC legislation as it is proposed state by state.

"MADD fought hard to pass a national .08 BAC law that has saved thousands of lives over the past 15 years," Witty said. "We continue to stand behind that national standard. But for states that want an even stronger law — let's roll up our sleeves and get to work."

Drunk driving is still the leading killer on our roads, and the numbers are going the wrong way. In 2017 alone, drunk driving killed almost 11,000 people — a 9 percent increase since 2014, when the number of people killed by drunk driving had dropped below 10,000.

"In the 39 years since MADD's founding, the number of drunk driving deaths have been reduced by half," Witty said. "But the recent rise in lives lost, and the horrific drunk driving crashes that continue to dominate the news, are constant reminders that our work is just beginning. We know that strong laws, backed by consistent law enforcement will save lives. MADD will put every effort into supporting both of these, until there are No More Victims."

About Mothers Against Drunk Driving

Founded in 1980 by a mother whose daughter was killed by a drunk driver, Mothers Against Drunk Driving® (MADD) is the nation's largest nonprofit working to end drunk driving, help fight drugged driving, support the victims of these violent crimes and prevent underage drinking. MADD has helped to save nearly 380,000 lives, reduce drunk driving deaths by more than 50 percent and promote designating a non-drinking driver. MADD's *Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving*® calls for law enforcement support, ignition interlocks for all offenders and advanced vehicle technology. MADD has provided supportive services to nearly one million drunk and drugged driving victims and survivors at no charge through local victim advocates and the 24-Hour Victim Help Line 1-877-MADD-HELP. Visit www.madd.org or call 1-877-ASK-MADD.