



WSWA Legislative, Policy and Regulatory Priorities

State and Local Legislative Priorities

Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA) members have long worked to support local and state laws designed to keep alcohol out of the hands of underage drinkers and establish strict accountability. WSWA's social responsibility legislative principles include working to support and pass legislation at the state and local level achieve the following objectives:

- Establish strong penalties for adults who knowingly allow minors to consume alcohol on their property;
- Establish stiff penalties for adults who knowingly provide alcohol to minors;
- Establish strong penalties for the illegal possession of alcohol by minors;
- Establish strong penalties for the manufacturing, distribution or use of a false identification card;
- Establish the use of ID card scanners by retail outlets.

DWI Courts

Beyond these policies, WSWA has joined forces with the National Center for DWI Courts (NCDC) to promote best practices for DWI Courts and promote the wider use of these effective treatment programs for serious and repeat offenders.

Often referred to as "accountability courts," DWI Courts are designed to treat high-risk drivers by holding them accountable for their actions in a judicially supervised rehabilitation program. In these special courts, judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, law enforcement and treatment experts work together to develop the most effective treatment for each offender—with proven results.

WSWA supports the wider use of these effective treatment courts to address the challenges created by serious and repeat DUI offenders.

Ignition Interlocks

Ignition interlocks are an effective means to combat hardcore drunk drivers.

While there have been significant decreases in the number of alcohol related crashes, fatalities and injuries in the last two decades, WSWA remains steadfast in its commitment to fight drunk driving. Ignition interlocks are not a silver bullet solution, but they are an effective tool that should be used as part of a comprehensive anti-DUI strategy when targeting the hard core drunk driver.

How Interlocks Work

Ignition interlocks are installed in vehicles and render the vehicle inoperable unless the driver first passes a breathalyzer test. The device can also require the driver to periodically re-take the test to ensure continued sobriety.

To be effective, interlock devices must be properly calibrated and occasionally tested by a certified vendor. Companies are working to develop new technologies such as “passive” interlock devices which would test skin secretions through the steering wheel or other parts of the vehicle—but these are just prototype or developmental products.

Use of Interlocks

WSWA supports state legislation that mandates the use of interlocks on the vehicle of any person convicted of a repeat DUI offense or any first time offender whose blood alcohol content (BAC) is over .15—“hard core” drunk drivers.

This baseline ensures that the devices are only used for those who pose the greatest threat to public safety. WSWA also believes that judges are in the best position to determine what threat other first time offenders pose and supports allowing judicial discretion in the case of first time offenders with a BAC under .15.

In 2008, WSWA worked with other industry partners and the American Legislative Exchange Council to draft model legislation consistent with this position. The organization formally adopted that legislation as a model bill at their summer meeting. Further, WSWA worked to include similar language in the most recent federal highway bill passed by Congress.

Why Not All Offenders or All Vehicles?

Some organizations have pushed to require interlock installation on the vehicles of all DUI offenders or even all vehicles. Expanding the universe of devices by such a large degree would create serious logistical problems for state agencies trying to monitor and administer the program.

Further, federal and state data indicates that the most dangerous offenders, and those that are more likely to reoffend, are those classified as “hard core” drunk drivers. Accordingly, efforts should specifically target these serious offenders.