



March 17, 2015
Testimony in Opposition of HB2159
Submitted by Christopher Mann
MADD Kansas Advisory Board / National Board of Directors

Honorable Chairman King and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

Thank you for the opportunity to address you in opposition of Sub to House Bill 2159. I am a volunteer for Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) as well as the victim of a drunk driver. Prior to the crash that ended my career, I was a police officer in Lawrence Kansas and after was a prosecutor in Wyandotte County Kansas. MADD is opposed to Sub to HB2159

Every day in America, another 28 people die as a result of drunk driving crashes. (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration FARS data, 2014). Kansas has made substantial progress over the past few years in strengthening DUI laws and in turn has seen a reduction in DUI fatalities on our roadways. The efforts in Kansas have earned it a five-star rating from MADD. One of only 13 states to receive such a rating. What's more important is the laws we have passed have allowed offenders the opportunity to learn to correct their behavior, to change their habits and hopefully not become a habitual problem for our state.

This bill aims in part to reward habitual violators for their continued dangerous behavior. According to the National Department of Transportation about one-third of all drivers arrested or convicted of drunk driving are repeat offenders. A full two-thirds are first time offenders and for those who received diversion, it worked. For the one-third who did not get the message and do not stop their irresponsible behavior, rewarding them is not the solution.

This anti-business bill would allow habitual DUI offenders to hide their offenses from business owners who deserve to know the liability they are taking on to their payroll. The reason put forward for this bill is to help people with DUIs get driving-related jobs. Legislation to hide the DUI is not the answer. It is obvious the businesses consider this to be an offense they are not willing to overlook for a driving job. Allowing the most problematic and dangerous drivers to hide their offense will do nothing but cause problems for employers and put our citizens in further danger. After years of saving the lives of Kansas citizens with smart, effective legislation, we don't need to reverse course and weaken our laws.

This bill benefits the worst driving offenders in our community. Our citizens deserve better. MADD strongly urges a vote against this bill.

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