

Jesse White Awarded ‘2015 Legislative Champion’ by Mothers Against Drunk Driving

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Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White was recognized today by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) National President Colleen Sheehey-Church as the 2015 Legislative Champion. Sheehey-Church cited White's leadership in the fight against drunk driving, and his efforts to implement and improve Illinois' Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock Device (BAIID) program.

"I am honored to receive this prestigious recognition," said White. "I want to applaud and commend MADD and MADD National President Colleen Sheehey-Church for all that they do to help combat drunk driving, not only in Illinois, but across the nation."

MADD's tireless efforts have saved thousands of lives, and made roads in Illinois and around the country much safer. But I want to be clear, we have more work to do and we must remain vigilant in keeping drunk drivers off of our roads."

"MADD is thankful for the leadership of Secretary of State White for recognizing that our battle to stop the scourge of drunk driving is not nearly finished," said MADD National President Sheehey-Church. "His fearless leadership has set the tone for many to rededicate themselves this year to eliminating drunk driving once and for all."

Illinois has become a national leader for its DUI countermeasure efforts, having been awarded a top 5-star rating from MADD. Illinois' BAID program was highlighted by MADD as a key reason for the top ranking.

White noted that over the last two years his office's BAID program has prevented more than 90,000 vehicles from starting because driver breath tests detected alcohol. Since 2009, when White expanded BAID to include first-time DUI offenders, drunk driving deaths in Illinois have dropped by 24 percent.

Illinois' BAID program requires all first-time DUI offenders who wish to continue driving to install a BAID on their vehicles. Motorists are required to blow into the BAID, which measures their blood alcohol content (BAC) levels. The device is designed to prevent DUI offenders from driving after having consumed alcohol.

White and Sheehey-Church also reminded people to travel safely on November 25th, the night before Thanksgiving, which is known as "Blackout Wednesday." This has become one of the biggest drinking nights of the year.

"As we welcome students, friends and relatives home, let's remember to celebrate this long holiday weekend safely and responsibly," White said. "Enjoy the festivities, but don't drink and drive. Call a cab, use

public transportation or designate a sober driver."