

There is a push in the Minnesota Legislature that will extend the length of time repeat DWI offenders need to spend on ignition interlock. On the face of it, it may seem like a good solution, with the common argument that interlock reduces recidivism by around 70% while installed. Keeping someone on interlock for six years instead of three years, or ten years instead of four years may keep some from drinking and driving while on the device, then what? This is built on the concept that punishing substance use disorders will change behavior, but this is nothing more than another penalty. While interlock is a net positive for public safety, if you look at the current system, the three years for the third offense and four years for the fourth offense can be looked at through the lens of allowing the person to drive and continue their life while they get their mental health and substance use in check. This is hopefully done through treatment programs and with the criminal justice system. Both the third and fourth offense are also subject to a verification of abstinence from alcohol where if the person registers a failed test, the time on interlock starts over. While interlock may make some develop healthy behavior where they don't drink and drive or they decide not to drink at all, there is no mechanism within the interlock program that measures for behavior change, nor does it encourage the right behavior change. What may be some negatives of making the third offense six years and fourth offense ten years? There is a cost of \$150+ per month for ongoing monitoring costs and for the equipment leased from a company, which can increase just like any other costs, limited long term funding options for assistance, with the cost of the equipment being over \$1,500 the person is responsible for should it go missing or something gets broken. While it may mean people have less money to drink, to some, it might also mean some can't afford ongoing professional mental health or substance use programs, leading to less positive outcomes. There is an ongoing bimonthly shop visit for calibration with select mechanic shops, as the interlock companies' contract with specific shops. If the person misses the visit within the 7-day window, the vehicle becomes immobile and the time they need to be on interlock is extended. And last, the restrictions apply to all motor vehicles, atv/utv, boats, snowmobiles for example. This is why the argument that this is about behavior change falls flat, for the standard third or fourth offense a person could be five years of not attempting to drink and drive or completely sober, under the proposed change, they still can't fully enjoy the great outdoors, or maybe they do and get another criminal charge, and again an extension to the time they drive with interlock. So it's easy to look at ignition interlocks as keeping the streets safe from dangerous drunk driving at the person's expense, it doesn't cover all impaired driving. If the person doesn't want to change, they can see it as a minor inconvenience, while those who do change can see it as another barrier to living a semi-

normal life and wonder how long it's sustainable. According to deterrence theory put out by MN House research in 2019 "crimes involving conscious planning can be more easily deterred than those that relate to addiction or sudden emotions". While maybe there was some research with the bills between the time of the Park Tavern tragedy in September 2024 that led to the bills and the time they were introduced in March 2025, there has been very little public discussion on how this helps with the mental health and substance use issues in Minnesota. While there are some good provisions in the Senate bill, is extending the length of time appropriate, or does it just degrade the system? Fiscal year 2024 saw 10,580 new enrollments entering the program and 5,435 completing the program, with the current number being 23,080 according to the 2026-27 Biennial Budget DPS Budget Activity Narrative from January 2025. While some of those are below the third offense, this is not an insignificant number of people. Also the 2023 Probation Survey by the DOC has 19,058 people on Gross Misdemeanor and another 3,256 on Felony DWI probation, how much more would the separation be if people are on interlock longer? Protecting public safety from DWI by an out of sight out of mind approach instead of a public health approach is not a solution.