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President & CEO

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The Honorable Dennis Keene
Kentucky House of Representatives
702 Capitol Ave
Annex Room 358A
Frankfort KY 40601

Dear Representative Keene:

The Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility (Responsibility.org) is a national not-for-profit that leads the fight to eliminate drunk driving and underage drinking and is funded by Bacardi U.S.A., Inc.; Beam Suntory; Brown-Forman; Constellation Brands, Inc.; DIAGEO; Hood River Distillers, Inc.; and Pernod Ricard USA. For more than 23 years, Responsibility.org has transformed countless lives by bringing individuals, families and communities together to guide a lifetime of conversation around alcohol responsibility and by offering proven strategies to stop impaired driving. Please visit www.responsibility.org.

Technological advances provide our nation with tremendous opportunity to positively impact the effort to stop drunk driving. In fact, the United States Government and the auto industry are currently working to develop technology that will not allow a vehicle to start if the driver's BAC exceeds the legal limit (.08 BAC). We support this effort.

In the interim, there are many effective and evidence-based solutions to address the drunk driving issue in America. One such countermeasure is the use of ignition interlock devices (IIDs) among DUI offenders. House Bill 60 requires the installation of interlocks for convicted DUI offenders. It will strengthen the state's existing interlock program and increase participation rates. It will also require offenders to demonstrate proof of participation in the state's alcohol education and treatment program prior to ignition interlock installation. Responsibility.org supports your legislation and urges swift passage this session.

It is important to recognize that impaired driving countermeasures are frequently enacted and implemented as piecemeal solutions within an overburdened and underfunded criminal justice system. The result has all too often been that dangerous and high-risk offenders (typically repeat offenders), are able to slip through cracks in the system without complying with sentence conditions, such as interlocks. These offenders

continue to present a danger to everyone on the nation's roadways as witnessed by the following statistics:

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), drunk drivers drive repeatedly before ever being detected and arrested (average of 80 times before first arrest).
- According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the majority (70%) of alcohol-impaired driving deaths involve drivers with very high-BAC levels (.15 and above), a trend that has remained relatively unchanged for more than a decade.
- According to the NHTSA, drivers with a BAC of .08 or higher involved in fatal crashes were seven times more likely to have a prior conviction for DWI than were drivers in fatal crashes with no alcohol.

For these reasons, we are also proud to support pending legislation (H.B. 135 and S.B. 34) in Kentucky that would lengthen the lookback period for DUI from 5 years to 10 years.

The solutions to stop drunk driving work best in combination, not in isolation. The long-term desired goal should be the prevention of drunk driving and a reduction in recidivism such that first offenders do not become repeat offenders. If communities, the criminal justice system, and legislatures begin to apply a comprehensive approach to this issue, significant gains in the fight against drunk driving will be achieved.

As part of a comprehensive solution to eliminate drunk driving, Responsibility.org supports the mandatory and effective use of ignition interlocks for all convicted DWI offenders. Effective use of IIDs requires proper assessment and treatment, supervision, and verification of installation for all offenders ordered to install the device.

Evidence shows interlocks are highly effective in preventing alcohol-impaired driving for both hardcore offenders and first-time offenders while they are installed with an average reduction in recidivism of 64% (Willis et al., 2005). In addition to the use of this technology, Responsibility.org also believes actions must be taken to improve ignition interlock installation rates and to expand treatment opportunities in conjunction with interlock program participation. Research shows that referral to and participation in appropriate treatment interventions are particularly important for hardcore drunk drivers as this population of offenders are historically resistant to behavior change.

It is essential that effective screening for alcohol, drugs, and mental health issues be conducted with DWI offenders in tandem with an interlock sanction to identify those offenders who have issues that must be treated. Research shows that repeat DWI offenders often suffer from multiple disorders. In one study, in addition to a lifetime alcohol disorder, 41% of the participants had a drug-related disorder and 44% had a major mental health disorder that was not alcohol or drug-related (Shaffer et al., 2007). Absent the identification and treatment of substance use and co-occurring disorders, long-term behavior change is unlikely for these offenders. In order to prevent future instances of drunk driving, and subsequently, save lives, the

underlying causes of DWI offending (such as substance misuse or mental health issues) must be addressed.

Responsibility.org and the Division on Addiction at Cambridge Health Alliance, a teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School, are working together to expand and test a Computerized Assessment and Referral System (CARS) for use with a structured diagnostic mental health assessment in DWI intervention and treatment settings. Already piloted with support from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), the project examines the relationship between psychiatric profiles and driving under the influence among repeat DWI offenders. We hope this project will help states better identify, sentence, supervise, and treat hardcore drunk drivers and subsequently, reduce recidivism.

In conclusion, Responsibility.org believes that strong laws enabling swift identification, certain punishment, and effective treatment are fundamental elements necessary to reduce the incidence of drunk driving. Responsibility.org further believes that these elements must be coordinated into a statewide system in order to be effective.

If there is anything that Responsibility.org can do to support this effort, please contact Brandy Nannini, Vice President, Government Relations and Traffic Safety at 202-637-0077 or at brandy.nannini@Responsibility.org.

Sincerely,



Ralph Blackman
President & CEO