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American Beverage Licensees  
Bethesda, MD

March 14, 2019

The Honorable Janice D. Schakowsky  
Chairwoman

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rogers  
Ranking Member

Subcommittee on Consumer Protection & Commerce  
House Energy & Commerce Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: Supporting Long Term Solutions for Fighting Drunk Driving & Recidivism**

Dear Chairwoman Schakowsky & Ranking Member McMorris Rogers:

American Beverage Licensees is a trade association of nearly 15,000 beverage licensees who own and operate independent bars, taverns and package stores in cities and town across the country. Some of the last locally-owned small businesses on Main Street, ABL members are active in their communities both as business people and responsible citizens, contributing to their local economies and the civic fabric of their hometowns.

Beverage licensees are responsible for handling, selling and serving beverage alcohol, an age-restricted product which, if misused, can cause harm. They are also stakeholders when it comes to preventing drunk driving. Beverage retailers are engaged in state and local-level policy discussions concerning drunk driving and to find reasonable and effective solutions.

Despite a track record of supporting responsibility efforts and policies, ABL is aware that there are those involved in the conversation and policy-making process surrounding drunk driving who do not believe that any segment of the beverage alcohol industry has a role to play in the discussion.

We couldn't disagree more.

ABL and its beverage retailer members have supported the efforts of state legislatures and the prevention community to close legal loopholes in order to better protect their communities from drunk drivers. That has meant supporting graduated sentencing with required ignition interlocks for hardcore and repeat offenders, and other permanent approaches that address recidivism.

ABL firmly believes that a comprehensive approach, tailored to each offender and based on his or her needs and dependency, is necessary if we are to be serious about addressing drunk driving. Incorporating a thorough approach via the criminal justice system – and a judge in particular – will continue to move the fight against drunk driving in the right direction.

On behalf of those represented by American Beverage Licensees, the communities we serve, the millions of Americans we employ and the hundreds of millions more who responsibly enjoy the hospitality we provide, **we encourage you to support a comprehensive approach to fighting drunk driving by opposing any one-size-fits-all federal mandates for ignition interlocks or any other singular technology.**

**American Beverage Licensees**

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Relying on technology is only part of the solution, and recidivism will continue if assessment, rehabilitation and other comprehensive countermeasures are not in place. By preventing judges and courts from using discretion in how they adjudicate drunk driving cases, a federal mandate would have the effect of weakening efforts to monitor hardcore drunk drivers and other high-risk offenders. Instead of a one-size-fits-all mindset, a better approach would be to focus on DWI courts and similar solutions that are being used all over the United States, as well as incentives for states that focus on enforcement (by police and judges) of existing drunk driving laws.

It's also important to recognize that transportation options have evolved and continue to change in the "gig" economy. Thanks to ride-sharing companies and programs like SafeRide, more options exist than ever before for adults who choose to responsibly enjoy beverage alcohol products and make lawful decisions on how they get to wherever they are going.

In addition, the rise of poly-substance impaired driving must be considered and addressed in order to develop the truest picture possible when it comes to which substances are causing incidents of impaired driving.

**As you consider the serious issues surrounding drunk driving, ABL strongly encourages you to support long-term solutions to drunk driving that address recidivism, while opposing mandates that do not distinguish between the dependencies of individual offenders and do not ensure success in this fight.** We look forward to working with you and being part of the solution when it comes to this serious issue.

Sincerely,



John D. Bodnovich  
American Beverage Licensees

**ABL Affiliates**

Alabama Beverage Licensees Association  
Alaska CHARR  
United Beverage Retailers of Arkansas  
Colorado For Safety  
Connecticut Package Stores Association  
Delaware Small Beverage License Council  
Florida Independent Spirits Association  
Georgia Alcohol Dealers Association  
Illinois Licensed Beverage Association  
Indiana Association of Beverage Retailers  
Kansas Licensed Beverage Association  
Kentucky Association of Beverage Retailers  
Maryland State Licensed Beverage Assoc.  
Massachusetts Package Stores Association

Mississippi Hospitality Beverage Assoc.  
Montana Tavern Association  
New Jersey Liquor Stores Alliance  
New York State Liquor Store Assoc.  
Retail Liquor Association of Oklahoma  
Malt Beverage Distributors Association of Pennsylvania  
Rhode Island Liquor Stores Association  
ABC Stores of South Carolina  
Licensed Beverage Dealers of South Dakota  
Tennessee Wine & Spirits Retailers Association  
Texas Package Stores Association  
Virginia Licensed Beverage Association  
Tavern League of Wisconsin  
Wyoming State Liquor Association