

## PROTECT ILLINOIS CITIZENS ON THE HIGHWAYS

### **Please amend Illinois House Bill 218 (remove dangerous “per se” language):**

Marijuana decriminalization and legalization for medical and recreational purposes present potential traffic safety repercussions. DUID laws are critical to ensuring that our national roadways remain safe from impaired drivers.

AAIM has significant concerns that the amended language of HB 218 will negatively affect Illinois’ efforts to stop impaired driving. Though we take no position on marijuana legalization/decriminalization, we believe marijuana must be effectively addressed in statute to prevent increases in impaired driving.

**Concerns in reference to Amendment #4 (HA4) of HB218:** The proposed 25ng in saliva/15ng in blood per se limit is significantly higher than any other state or country with a per se illegal limit. Research supports the premise that impairment by cannabis starts at extremely lower levels.

**A per se level is not supported by science:** Toxicologists caution policymakers that since THC does not behave like alcohol, it is unrealistic to expect the scientific agreement to an impairing level of THC in bodily fluids. THC and alcohol do not impair either blood or oral fluid. They only impair the brain. We have historically tested blood as a surrogate to estimate what is in the brain. For alcohol, blood is an excellent surrogate. Alcohol is a small water soluble molecule that rapidly equilibrates between the blood and the brain, by easily crossing the blood - brain barrier. Therefore, what is in the blood is in the brain, and vice-versa. For THC, blood is a terrible surrogate since THC is a much larger fat-soluble molecule. There is very little correlation between THC blood concentration and THC brain concentration. So it should come as no surprise that there is little correlation between THC blood concentration and driving impairment.

Much less is known about the correlation of THC in an oral fluid with either THC in the brain or with driving impairment. We do know that the correlation between THC oral fluid concentration and THC blood concentration is irregular and that THC levels in oral fluid are much higher than THC levels in the blood.

For more information regarding cannabis use and DUID visit:

<http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana>;

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/marijuana>;

<http://www.nhtsa.gov/search?q=DUID&x=28&y=4>

<http://www.aapcc.org/>

<http://www.aapcc.org/alerts/synthetic-marijuana/>

**When probable cause is established, lawful use of marijuana is not a defense for DUID:** If Illinois legislators set a 15-nanogram threshold for driving under the influence of THC, which is three times higher than Colorado or Washington, it will ultimately be dangerous for Illinois roads. People will be showing impairment, yet they are under the illegal limit. We are concerned that this will allow people to consume a significant amount of marijuana before they are held criminally liable.

**Please join us in opposing this legislation as written. Please urge your senator and representative to remove this language from HB 218. For your convenience, a templet letter is attached.**

**To contact your legislator go to:** <http://www.ilga.gov/senate/> - <http://www.ilga.gov/house/>

**To find your Illinois State Representative go to:**

<http://chicago.about.com/od/governmentandmedia/f/Illinois-State-Representative.htm>

**To find your Illinois State Senator go to:**

<http://chicago.about.com/od/governmentandmedia/f/Illinois-State-Senator.htm>