

## Don't be so quick to raise alarm about losing funds

I'd like to provide some clarification regarding Wisconsin's non-compliance with the federal requirement to adopt a 0.08 blood-alcohol standard for drunken driving.

First, Wisconsin has not yet lost any federal highway aid. If we fail to comply with federal law, we'll begin to lose funding in 2004; we've lost only the eligibility to apply for incentive funds. We have until 2007 to comply before we risk permanent losses. If we comply within four years of federal withholding, we reclaim funds.

Second, failure to adopt a 0.08 standard has no effect on Wisconsin's current budget deficit. Federal highway aid sanctions would impact the transportation fund, not the general fund. To imply that a potential loss of federal funding will impact the current budget deficit is inaccurate and alarmist.

Third, Wisconsin law targets repeat offenders and elevated blood-alcohol levels. Addressing the most dangerous aspects of the problem was recognized by the National Commission Against Drunk Driving as an innovation that could prove to be more effective than 0.08 for first offenses. We already have a 0.08 standard for individuals with two prior drunken driving convictions and require absolute sobriety for those with three or more.

I am committed to capturing every dollar of federal funding available. The Legislature has ample time to comply with federal law or improve Wisconsin's drunken driving statistics with the laws already in place.

**Rep. Jeff Stone**

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