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Statement by David Kelly, Executive Director
Coalition of Ignition Interlock Manufacturers
New York Senate Transportation Committee – May 2, 2013

Good morning, my name is David Kelly. I am Executive Director of the Coalition of Ignition Interlock Manufacturers. Our members – LMG Holdings, Smart Start and CST represent a majority of the ignition interlock industry in the United States. I thank you for the invitation to appear today.

Protecting children is a core responsibility that we all share, especially when they are transported in school buses. As you know, we have done a very good job of improving the structural integrity of school buses through reinforced high-backed seats to seat belts to access to vehicle egress. We are now at a point where most, if not all, of the injuries and fatalities that happen in bus crashes are caused by driver error.

Many communities have begun to aggressively address this issue of driver behavior through highly visible enforcement and public education activities. Passing a stopped school bus, with its lights flashing and stop arm extended is one of the worst traffic safety infractions one can commit thanks to some of the very successful public education campaigns that have been developed. It is also a long held traffic safety fact that enforcement is the single greatest deterrent to changing driver behavior. The perception of getting a ticket is a strong motivator to safe driving.

Unfortunately, we have all seen recent press accounts and videos where bus drivers are impaired and cause a crash. While this behavior is clearly not the norm for most bus drivers, these recent examples raise concern.

CIIM supports any efforts to keep children and other drivers safe from any impaired driver, whether behind the wheel of an automobile, school bus or commercial vehicle. S 1347, among other things, requires school buses to be equipped with ignition interlock devices.

As we have seen here in New York, and across the country, ignition interlocks are a proven method of reducing drunk driving when they are installed on a vehicle. Thanks to the leadership of many in this room, including Chairman Fuschillo, New York has joined the growing list of states that require ignition interlocks for all persons convicted of DWI. Maximizing the future benefits of Leandra's Law is the priority of CIIM members.

Interlocks on buses, while unique in the United States, is not without some international precedent. Both France and Finland require buses to be equipped with interlock devices. In both countries, all stakeholders have agreed that getting students home safely is a priority and have accepted the technology as a safety device. As there is a healthy international market for this application of the technology, we would be interested in the potential implications of S 1347 if it were to become law.

I welcome any questions members of the Committee may have. Thank you.

