

## Democratic radio: Empty Seats

Written by Wisconsin Senate, Bridget Esser  
Friday, 15 December 2017 16:47 -

---



***Wisconsin continues to be the worst in the nation with the highest rate of drunk driving. We can do more.***

---

MADISON, WI – Senator Chris Larson (D-Milwaukee) offered the weekly Democratic radio address today.

The audio file of this week's address can be found here:

<http://media2.legis.wisconsin.gov/multimedia/Sen07/senatorlarsonradio121417.mp3>

A written transcript of the address is below:



“Hello. This is Senator Chris Larson with your weekly Democratic Radio Address.

During this holiday season, families across Wisconsin will gather to celebrate the holidays with loved ones. Friends and family, neighbors and coworkers will come together at holiday parties, and dining room tables to enjoy the warmth of each other's company. But at some of our dining room tables, there will empty seats.

“On Christmas Eve 1998, I woke up to find my good friend, and classmate, Jennie, had been killed by a drunk driver the night before.

## Democratic radio: Empty Seats

Written by Wisconsin Senate, Bridget Esser  
Friday, 15 December 2017 16:47 -

---

“It was a devastating blow to each of us who knew her. It was a preventable tragedy and something that shaped each of us going forward. Unfortunately, stories like Jennie’s are far too common. In

2016 alone, there were 193 deaths related to drunk driving.

“With 1 in 4 adults admitting to driving while intoxicated, Wisconsin continues to be the worst in the nation with the highest rate of drunk driving. More alarmingly, first-time OWI offenders are estimated to have driven under the influence at least 80 times before their initial conviction.

“It is irresponsible and unacceptable to continue to ignore preventable deaths and injuries due to drunk driving. So, Democratic colleagues and I are introducing legislation to shut the door on the drunk driving culture in our state. The Drunk Driving Prevention Act’s purpose is to increase the accountability of offenders in order to change the culture and of drinking and driving in Wisconsin through the use of ignition interlock devices (IIDs). These devices help separate drinking from driving, and are proven effective in stopping drunk driving. The legislation being proposed will mandate that all drivers convicted of an OWI must install an IID on all vehicles driven for 1 year. The facts show when ignition interlock devices are installed, reoccurrence of drunk driving is reduced by 67%.

“As we travel and enjoy this holiday season, let’s remember to be mindful this is also the season where roads becoming more dangerous due to increased drunk driving. It’s well past time we do more to change the drinking and driving culture of Wisconsin and stop preventable deaths, injuries, and property loss. Let’s make sure more seats are filled around the table this Christmas.

“Merry Christmas and have a safe and Happy Holidays.”