

# Missoulian

## 24/7 sobriety: Schweitzer signs bill cracking down on drunken driving

By MATT GOURAS Associated Press | Posted: Saturday, May 7, 2011 7:47 am

HELENA - Gov. Brian Schweitzer has signed the Legislature's top measure aimed at cracking down on drunken driving, putting a cap on a state conversation spurred by several high-profile deaths.

The so-called "24/7" program was overwhelmingly endorsed by lawmakers before they adjourned and had the strong backing of Attorney General Steve Bullock. Schweitzer signed the measure, House Bill 106, late Friday.

The program requires repeat DUI offenders to take a breath test twice a day, every day, at their own expense from the time of arrest until their sentence is completed.

Supporters argued it has proven successful in keeping repeat offenders sober during a pilot project, and costs taxpayers nothing since the offenders pay for the tests.

A few opponents, including one lawmaker and bar owner, unsuccessfully tried to argue that the full slate of DUI crackdowns was bad for business in small towns.

For the most part, lawmakers from both sides of the aisle backed the 24/7 initiative.

It came after lawmakers took a long look at enhanced penalties in the wake of the state's annual ranking at or near the top of per-capita drunken driving deaths, and focus on a drunken-driving culture many argued had been left alone for far too long.

Advocates for stronger laws argue the program will make a big difference by intervening early with repeat DUI offenders.

Another DUI measure that cleared the Legislature has already been signed by the governor. The law makes it easier for police to get a warrant for blood tests on repeat offenders refusing a breath test.

Failures included a plan to extend the timeframe courts could use to count previous drunken-driving convictions.

Courts currently can only include DUIs over the past five years when determining repeat offenders for purposes of leveling charges and punishment.

[http://missoulian.com/news/local/article\\_c687e03e-78b0-11e0-8cc0-001cc4c03286.html](http://missoulian.com/news/local/article_c687e03e-78b0-11e0-8cc0-001cc4c03286.html)

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**CRIME & COURTS**

## **Schweitzer signs 24/7 sobriety program bill into law**

Posted: May 7, 2011 5:53 PM by **Kay Rossi (Great Falls)**

Updated: May 7, 2011 5:54 PM



A program to enforce sobriety regulations among DUI offenders officially became law Saturday after Governor Brian Schweitzer signed the bill.

The 24/7 program requires second and subsequent DUI offenders to take a breath test twice a day while awaiting sentencing.

The program is funded by the offenders who pay \$2 per breath test.

A pilot program has been reportedly successful in Lewis and Clark County.

In the first 6 months of that program, the county reported 99 percent of the time the offenders were blowing clean tests.

<http://www.kxlh.com/news/24-7-sobriety-program-officially-becomes-law/>

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**MONTANA LEGISLATURE**

## **MT 24/7 Sobriety bill heading to Governor's desk**

Posted: Apr 19, 2011 4:52 PM by **Marnee Banks (KXLH Helena)**

Updated: Apr 19, 2011 4:53 PM



HELENA- The 24-7 Sobriety bill is finally headed to Governor Brian Schweitzer's desk after undergoing a few amendments. The bill passed the Montana House of Representatives by a count of 97-2 on Tuesday.

The measure requires second and subsequent DUI offenders to take a breath test twice daily from the time the offender is arrested until they are sentenced. The offenders must pay for the breath tests themselves.

Montana Attorney General Steve Bullock introduced the 24/7 Sobriety Project as a pilot program in Lewis & Clark County.

Since May of last year, county officials have administered over 11,400 breath tests, with 99% of them returning a blood alcohol level of zero.

<http://www.kaj18.com/news/mt-24-7-sobriety-bill-heading-to-governor-s-desk/>