

New MADD Report Shows Only 59% of Drunk Drivers Are Convicted

Court Monitoring Program Sends Observers into Courtrooms in 15 States

WASHINGTON ([PRWEB](#)) April 08, 2020 -- A new Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Court Monitoring Report shows 59% of drunk drivers are convicted of their charges. The nationwide average reflects observations and data collected by MADD court monitors in 15 states from January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019. The conviction rate is lower than in 2018, when MADD's court monitors noted an average 61% conviction rate. MADD added three states — Arkansas, Colorado and Maryland — to the Court Monitoring Program in 2019 to expand our reach into more courtrooms across the country.

“The Court Monitoring Report shows why MADD is needed now more than ever,” said MADD National President Helen Witty. “I am appalled that the average conviction rate is below 60 percent. It is shocking that judges and prosecutors are not enforcing the laws for committing this violent crime. MADD will continue to put more monitors in courtrooms to hold judges and prosecutors accountable for failing to treat drunk driving like the violent crime that it is.”

Observing courtroom proceedings is a longstanding tradition with MADD. In December 2018, MADD reached 100,000 cases followed as part of the formal Court Monitoring Program that began in 2015. MADD trains staff and volunteers to attend judicial proceedings involving drunk driving cases to ensure laws are being enforced and prosecuted to the fullest extent. The cases that are monitored do not involve injuries or deaths.

“Many people who have lost a loved one to drunk and drugged driving experience the justice system for the first time, and they are often surprised at how their cases are handled. That’s what drove the creation of MADD 40 years ago and what drives the Court Monitoring Program today,” Witty said. “Volunteers and staff are a presence in the courtrooms that let law enforcement, prosecutors and judges know that we support them and expect them to treat these cases as the serious, violent crimes that they are.”

The Court Monitoring Program is part of MADD’s Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving, started in 2006, to support law enforcement efforts to protect the public from drunk driving.

Volunteers and staff document every step of the judicial process and enter the disposition, age, gender, outcome and other information about each case. Court monitoring is active in 15 states across the country, with plans to expand to other states as volunteers and funding become available. States with court monitoring are:

- Arizona
- Arkansas
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Illinois
- Louisiana
- Maryland
- Missouri
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Mexico
- North Carolina

- South Carolina
- Texas
- Virginia

The report reveals observations by court monitors who collected data over a one-year period in at least one jurisdiction within their state (reports for 10 well-established court monitoring states can be found at <https://www.madd.org/the-solution/drunk-driving/court-monitoring/>). The results are from a diverse cross-section of jurisdictions across the country. Ultimately, MADD hopes to add enough volunteers and staff to monitor courts in every jurisdiction, in every state, to produce comprehensive statewide and nationwide reports.

“While many of our court cases are currently on hold due to COVID-19, MADD will be back in courtrooms as soon as it is safe,” Witty said. “It is critical that law enforcement officers know that we support the incredibly important work they do to bring charges against drunk and drugged drivers. Equally important is to follow these cases to the end to improve conviction rates and put an end to this crime, which continues to be the leading killer on our roads.”

About Mothers Against Drunk Driving

Founded in 1980 by a mother whose daughter was killed by a drunk driver, Mothers Against Drunk Driving® (MADD) is the nation’s largest nonprofit working to end drunk driving, help fight drugged driving, support the victims of these violent crimes and prevent underage drinking. MADD has helped to save more than 390,000 lives, reduce drunk driving deaths by more than 50 percent and promote designating a non-drinking driver. MADD’s Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving® calls for law enforcement support, ignition interlocks for all offenders and advanced vehicle technology. MADD has provided supportive services to nearly one million drunk and drugged driving victims and survivors at no charge through local victim advocates and the 24-Hour Victim Help Line 1-877-MADD-HELP. Visit www.madd.org or call 1-877-ASK-MADD.



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