



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NEWS

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH – GOVERNOR

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Governor Blagojevich Recognizes DUI Crash Victims with Memorial Signs on State Roadways

New law allows families to memorialize loved ones while sending a message about dangers of drunk driving

CHICAGO – As a result of Governor Rod R. Blagojevich’s signing of “Tina’s Law,” the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) today installed the first authorized DUI memorial sign to recognize the tragic loss of life due to drunk driving. “Tina’s Law” allows DUI crash victims’ family members to request that IDOT install memorial signs along Illinois highways. The first sign, honoring 17-year-old DUI crash victim Caitlin Elizabeth Weese of Elgin, was installed today along Illinois 72 in the north suburbs of Chicago.

“Caitlin Weese died under tragic circumstances and we are saddened by her loss,” said Governor Blagojevich. “This incident is just one example of why I signed ‘Tina’s Law.’ Not only can families now memorialize their loved ones, they can also help send a powerful message about the deadly effects of drinking and driving to other motorists.”

“This is a program that IDOT helped organize and we are confident that these signs will make Illinois roadways safer,” said IDOT Secretary Milton R. Sees. “We hope this program will allow DUI crash victims families to keep their loved one’s memory alive.”

The law allows relatives of DUI crash victims to request a memorial marker for any crash that occurred on or after January 1, 1990. The memorial markers are a 36 by 24 inch blue sign with white letters that read, “Please Don’t Drink and Drive.” At a relative’s request, a separate 36 by 18 inch panel that reads, “In Memory of (victim’s name),” followed by the date of the crash will be mounted below the primary sign.

“I am honored that the first official “Please Don’t Drink and Drive” sign has been placed in memory of my wonderful step-daughter, Caitlin Weese. It is comforting to our family and will be to many other grieving families that our loved ones’ tragic deaths will be memorialized while also helping to end these senseless crimes,” said Joel Mains, stepfather of Caitlin Weese.

The law is named for Tina Ball, a mother of seven and a road construction worker who was killed by a drunk driver while she was working on I-57 on September 15, 2003. The Tina Ball Memorial DUI Task Force was instrumental in pushing for passage of Tina's Law, formally known as House Bill 1900. The bill's sponsors were Sen. Kirk Dillard (R-Hinsdale) and Rep. Susana Mendoza (D-Chicago).

“By establishing that a standard memorial be erected in someone's memory the State is not only offering a dignified way to remember a loved one, but also ensuring that the people in charge of maintaining the roads are able to do their jobs without being forced to remove the markers,” said Sen. Dillard.

“It is my sincere hope that these signs are highly effective in helping to reduce or eliminate drunk driving and that they bring solace to those who knew and loved the victims of the fatal DUI crashes,” said the Honorable Dorothy Brown, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County.

“DUI crash families have been requesting roadside markers for more than 20 years. It has been gratifying to AAIM that by working together the Governor, the Illinois Department of Transportation and Clerk Brown's office made this important program a reality,” said Marti Belluschi, an AAIM spokesperson.

Family members of DUI crash victims can apply for memorial signs through IDOT district offices. AAIM and MADD can assist family members in obtaining and completing applications. There is a \$150 fee for the “Don't Drink and Drive” sign and a \$50 fee for the plaque bearing the name of the victim. The Teamsters International Union is also providing funding for signs memorializing their members who have been killed by DUI offenders.