



## SENATOR JOSÉ MENÉNDEZ DISTRICT 26

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### **Senator José Menéndez Honored as a 2017 Legislator of the Year by Mothers Against Drunk Driving**

**San Antonio, Texas** – Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) has honored State Senator José Menéndez as a “2017 Legislator of the Year” for his efforts to reform and strengthen the state’s DWI law to prevent repeat offenders. Senator Menéndez was singled out for his work on a bill (SB761) that would have prevented drunk drivers from pleading out to lesser crimes and potentially avoid jail time.

Senator Menéndez is grateful to Jennifer A. Tharp, Comal County Criminal District Attorney, for originating this legislation and bringing it to the attention of the District 26 office.

The bill would have allowed true first-time offenders the opportunity to rehabilitate by giving judges the option to grant deferred adjudication and community supervision when there is no injury or property damage in drunk driving incidents. Those first-time offenses, however, would have been counted as repeat offenses if returned to court. As part of their community supervision, first-time offenders would be required to use an ignition interlock on their motorized vehicles to prevent them from getting on the road drunk. According to a report by MADD, ignition interlocks in Texas have blocked more than 245,000 attempts by drivers to get on the road while intoxicated, with nearly 28,000 blocked attempts just in the last year.

*The following quote is attributed to Senator José Menéndez:*

“I am very proud to have a truly dedicated and tireless partner in MADD, which has helped influence legislation like Senate Bill 761, a measure designed to offer rehabilitation for true first-time DWI offenders and prevent future offenses. SB 761 was written to encourage our Texas drivers to make mindful decisions on the road.”

*The following quote is attributed to Criminal District Attorney Jennifer A. Tharp:*

“This bill provides first-time offenders the opportunity to rehabilitate and move on with their lives under community supervision, should a judge deem that appropriate, while still keeping our roads safe from dangerous repeat offenders. I’ve seen families lose loved ones to repeat offenders who should not have been on the road, and I’ve seen first-time offenders who would change their behavior with rehabilitation.”

“I truly appreciate the work of Senator Menéndez and MADD and their support of this common-sense legislation that can create positive outcomes and help keep our roads safe,” Tharp added.

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