

Thirty-three years ago, July 1, 1982, the first DUI law in Colorado came into effect. July 23, 1982, my first husband, Gregory Scott Allen, was hit and killed by a repeat offender drunk driver on Highway 82 between Basalt and Aspen. We learned that the man who killed Greg was a repeat offender, who had 4 prior DUI's! He was driving on a suspended license and the plates on his vehicle were the plates for a different vehicle!

Greg lived 18 hours, was flown flight for life from Aspen to Grand Junction. Greg's parents and I had to drive for four hours to get to Grand Junction. This was before cell phones, so we would stop in every town to call and see how Greg was doing. We were so afraid he would not live before we got there. Greg had massive head injuries and after 18 hours we were informed that he was brain dead. Needless to say it was a very traumatic experience.

Back then my assets were frozen until the estate settled. I had no money to pay any of my bills, let alone the massive medical expenses brought on by this accident, the funeral expenses, etc. I had no car, because our car was totaled in this accident. My "case" is just a small drop in the bucket of what happens financially to the victims of these repeat offenders! Some people live longer before finally succumbing to their injuries, building up extensive medical expenses. Some people are fortunate to live through their experience, only to be subjected to life-long medical expenses, without a job, because they are unable to work! Most have to get Medicaid and financial assistance just to live...adding to the "cost" to the State Administrators.

In the thirty-three years since that DUI law went into effect, I have not seen much change happening in stopping these repeat offenders. I hear, almost daily it seems, of another person being hit and/or killed by drunk drivers, most of whom are repeat offenders. The present DUI law is not effective in slowing down or stopping drinking and driving.

Yes, these repeat offenders are sick, broken people and need help. Unfortunately we all know that an alcoholic cannot be helped unless they hit rock bottom and want to be helped. It seems to me that we continue to "enable" them to continue their path by feeling sorry for them.

By making DUI a felony for repeat offenders we are finally making a stand. These repeat offenders need to understand that there will be serious consequences for their actions. I feel that the only way to slow them down (and at least get them off the roads for a short time) is to make it a felony if they have had more than one or two DUI's. Maybe then the message will get across that it is unacceptable to drink and drive. In my opinion 1-2 years is not serious enough! If they had to face at least 10 years per offense, then maybe we might get their attention. If the repeat offender knows that they may be facing a felony charge and extensive jail or prison time, then maybe, just maybe they won't drink and then drive.

Setting up DUI check points seems like a good idea. However, the repeat offender knows how to avoid these by taking "back roads and street". As Ellie Phipps has said, "ACLU wants more rehab for repeat offenders. 'My question is this-would these same people from the ACLU and law makers find it appropriate to take someone who committed a random armed shooting with an AK47 and then give them 5, 7, 12 more chances...sending them back out in the street with their weapon each time, trusting they won't do it again? What is the difference? These repeat habitual drunk drivers choice of a weapon is a two ton vehicle barreling down the highway toward someone's family, and the results can be equally deadly. This has to stop!"

Felony DUI for Repeat Offenders should be a priority for our state leaders. Our state budget should fund the cost of taking the most dangerous drunk and drugged drivers off of Colorado roads. Colorado is one of five states without a felony DUI law so DUI is always a misdemeanor...no matter how many someone gets.

Felony DUI would only apply to people who have been convicted of driving drunk at least 4 times. Despite all treatment, education, and in-car breathalyzer devices they cannot stop driving and are putting our communities at risk.

Enough is enough! It is time to pass a felony DUI law in Colorado. Thank your for helping to make our local roads and communities safer!