An Open Letter to the Board of Directors,
Mothers Against Drunk Driving

Subject: MADD Position on NTSB Proposal to Lower DWI BAC from 0.08 to 0.05

Our daughter Maegan was killed on July 8 in Pickstown, SD while standing in a parking lot, 200’ off the highway, at the end of a long workday for the US Fish and Wildlife Service, along with her supervisor Dr. Robert Klumb. She was mowed down by a drunk driver going 60 MPH that made no effort to stop. Her death was so violent there were no viewable remains; we had no last look at our beautiful daughter. The local sheriff deputy came to our house at 1:45 AM on July 9 to inform us of her death.

The person that killed Maegan and Rob is Ronald Ray Fischer, 29, Lake Andes, SD and he is currently detained. He has been indicted on two counts of first degree manslaughter, class C felony, two counts of vehicular homicide, class 3 felony, one count of driving or control of vehicle with alcohol blood or while under the influence of alcohol or drug, and one count of ingesting non-alcoholic substance to become intoxicated.

Maegan’s obituary suggested donations be made to MADD in lieu of flowers. We now feel this was a mistake.

Had we known that MADD has not taken a position on lowering the threshold for DWI from 0.08 to 0.05 BAC, we would NOT have designated MADD as a recipient for donations.

It is our feeling that a 0.05 BAC threshold, which is the most common world standard, should have been a sensible and logical position for MADD to advocate, even prior to the May 14 NTSB report calling on states to lower BAC to 0.05. We naturally assumed MADD would be advocating “best practices” in DUI enforcement, most of which come from outside the US.

The lower BAC threshold allows for a clear and effective limit for people that they can consume a single alcoholic drink, and no more, without exceeding the limit. Even at 0.05 BAC, a driver is impaired. The current 0.08 threshold allows for multiple drinks and is inherently ambiguous (e.g., is it 2, 3 or 4 drinks in one or two hours and for whom?).

We are both mystified and disappointed at MADD’s position in this matter. While the technological solutions and increased enforcement advocated by MADD are sensible, it is our feeling that a clear and unambiguous limit of a single drink prior to driving would be the single most effective way for people to avoid the slippery slope of having multiple drinks prior to driving.

Sincerely,

Gregg A. Spindler / Susan L. Spindler