

From the desk of Randy McAlister

April 23, 2010

Dear Republican friend,

In recent days, you have heard about the controversy regarding Representative Tom Emmer's advocacy of relaxed DWI laws.

State convention delegate Sandra Berg, whose family was victimized by a drunk driver last year, wrote to you raising serious concerns that Rep. Emmer has shown grave – and politically bad – lapses in judgment by authoring legislation to weaken DWI laws.

As a police officer of 12 years and the son-in-law of a former Republican state legislator, I am well acquainted with both the policy making and law enforcement aspects of drunk driving. I have also been a paramedic for 17 years and have had to tell many families, in the dead of night, that their loved one has been killed by a drunk driver.

I am simply appalled at Tom Emmer's DWI legislation sponsored last year.

First, he authored a bill which would have the practical effect of allowing DWI offenders to hide their convictions from the public after a period of time.

Second, he authored a bill which would allow arrested DWI offenders to continue driving legally – because it would have prohibited the administrative revocation of their licenses pending their court appearance. This means they could continue to drive, and potentially drive drunk, for months.

This bill also would have had the effect of preventing the imposition of enhanced sentences on many habitual drunk drivers.

Under Rep. Emmer's proposed bill, someone arrested again for DWI while a prior DWI charge is pending could only be charged with additional misdemeanors because they didn't have any convictions for the prior arrests yet. Under current law, prosecutors have the ability to charge such an offender with gross-misdemeanor or even felony DWI.

Right now, many judges are lenient on felony DWI offenders. These offenders are serious threats to public safety – to you, your loved ones, friends, and neighbors – but they rarely get sentences that are as stiff as they should be according to the state's sentencing guidelines.

Enforcement of our DWI laws on our highways and roads is already difficult enough.

Can you imagine how much worse enforcement efforts will be if multiple DWI offenders are allowed to skate with misdemeanor charges for a third or fourth DWI?

What would you say if someone arrested for DWI were able to drive drunk again shortly after his arrest and yet suffer no greater legal consequences?

How would you feel if you had been informed of the injury or death of a family member and then learned that the perpetrator didn't have his license revoked?

The real issue is not Tom Emmer's prior offenses.

The real issue is Rep. Emmer's terrible judgment in working to weaken and undermine police officers', prosecutors', and society's efforts to deter drunk driving and to stop the carnage on Minnesota's roads.

We Republicans believe in strong public safety. Our state party platform says:

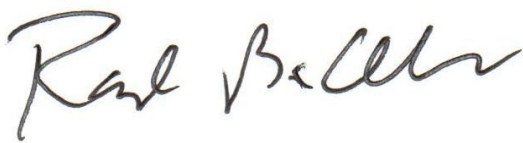
Republicans believe that the most fundamental function of government is to keep our property and us secure. Therefore we support: ...Establishing mandatory minimum prison sentences and substantially higher sentences for repeat offenders...

[Republican Party of Minnesota 2008 Standing Platform, Section 5].

But on the issue of DWI enforcement, Tom Emmer's recent efforts have not been in support of our party platform's position but in opposition to it.

Tom Emmer is not a platform Republican when it comes to the life-or-death issue of drunk driving.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randy McAlister". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Randy McAlister
State Convention Alternate, Senate District 55
Police Sergeant/Paramedic