Policy Committees pass drugged driving legislation

On Tuesday, the Senate and Assembly Committees on Public Safety both passed legislation to address drugged driving. While this statement may seem to indicate “business as usual,” this is the first time that the committees have passed significant legislation addressing drugged driving.

In the Senate, the committee passed SB 1462, sponsored by Cal Chiefs, CNOA, and We Save Lives. SB 1462 allows officers to use an oral fluid testing device to capture the presence of drugs in an individual’s saliva. In addition to providing officers with an additional tool, SB 1462 will provide us with a better idea of how many DUIDs there are in California. Currently, many cases involving both alcohol and drugs simply get filed as a DUI because blood samples of suspects are regularly collected and tested against an alcohol per se. With the addition of an oral fluid testing device as corroborating evidence, we will be able to see just how often individuals drive under the influence of alcohol, drugs and alcohol, or drugs. Interestingly, the Chair of the Committee, Senator Hancock, was the only “No” vote on the bill. A similar bill, AB 1356, failed to pass last year.

In the Assembly, the committee passed AB 2740, also supported by Cal Chiefs, which creates a 5 ng. per se for THC. The bill was met with wide law enforcement support and opposition from organizations such as the Drug Policy Alliance. Like in the Senate, the Chair of the Committee, Assemblymember Jones-Sawyer was a No vote on the bill, but the committee “rolled” him and passed the bill despite his recommendation.

As these bills proceed through the Legislature, we’d like to remind you that Cal Chiefs’ Legislative Day is June 1st in Sacramento. Chiefs are urged to attend with their second-in-command’s and discuss these bills with their Legislators in meetings scheduled by the Cal Chiefs office. Information and registration can be found here.