

I was recently one of the four candidates who ran for the position of governor for the state of Kansas. Prior to that, I was a 36 year educator, coach, principal, and dean of education. During my campaign, my father and mother were involved in a head on collision with a drunk driver. It was actually a double head on collision and the drunk driver's intoxication level was nearly twice the legal limit. This accident occurred on July 3, 2010. There have presently been no charges filed against the individual who hit my parents.

I do believe that the interlock system could make a difference. I also believe that the system should be placed in the vehicles of the first time offender. In addition, I firmly believe that in the case of injury or death, the responsible party should be liable for all personal injury costs as well as all material possessions lost in the accident. It is also my belief that the offender should be monetarily responsible to the offended party for the remainder of his/her life. The harsher the penalty may make it more likely that other individuals would be increasingly reluctant to get behind the steering wheel and drive after drinking.

The impact upon the extended family of the victim or victims should also be taken into consideration. My family was with my parents from July 3, 2010, through September of 2010. My sister and her family also essentially put their lives on hold so that we could be with my father while he was hospitalized. We battled insurance companies; we incurred medical expenses well over one million dollars; my mother lost her husband of 61 years all due to the irresponsible actions of a 23 year old who was driving home drunk at 5:50 a.m. It has now become the purpose of our family to make sure that the current laws regarding DUI's are changed and are much more stringent. Until a person has been through a tragedy such as the one my parents were in, it is impossible to understand the hurt, the frustration, and the dismay that we feel at the present time. I find it a travesty that the state of Kansas ranks 45th in the nation when it comes to penalizing the drunk driver.

When the issue of jail space arose on Wednesday, I believe that a solution would be in-home incarceration. In other words, make the offender wear an ankle bracelet so that he/she cannot leave his/her house. That approach at least limits the social drinker who may become a problem drinker from getting out on the road. The pain and injuries that my father incurred were beyond imagination. As is usually the case, the drunk driver in this specific incident suffered minor injuries compared to those of my father.

I want to emphasize that our family simply wants justice. If a person's life is taken or forever changed through the negligent actions of another, there should be a heavy, heavy penalty to pay for that negligence. The decisions that you make could very well save the life of a member of your own family. I would ask each of you to put yourselves in our place. The drunk driver who hit my parents affected my entire family and many others emotionally, financially, and personally. It is imperative that our elected officials send a clear message to those who choose

to drink and drive that no other families will have to suffer like our family has suffered. This is your opportunity to make a difference in the lives of those Kansans who do follow the law. When a drunk driver can be financially impacted for the remainder of his lifetime, he/she may think twice about driving under the influence. For the sake of our family and for my father, Bud Cannon, I would implore you to seize the opportunity to lead our state in a different direction when it comes to dealing with drunk drivers.

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ken Cannon". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Ken Cannon