

A national group that advocates against impaired driving announced their list of Legislators of the Year today which included two New Mexico lawmakers.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) named Sen. Lisa Torraco, R-Albuquerque, and Rep. Paul Pacheco, R-Albuquerque, as two of 70 legislators from around the United States who pushed for laws that helped with MADD's goal of eliminating impaired driving.

A press release from the group also touted New Mexico for being the only state to require ignition interlock devices before MADD's Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving.

"Prior to the Campaign, only one state — New Mexico — had an all-offender interlock law. Today, 25 states have enacted all-offender interlock laws," read the release.

During the 2015 Legislative session, Torraco introduced SB 499 which would have made it a misdemeanor for a driver to have a blood alcohol level of .08 while a minor is in the vehicle. Currently .08 is the legal limit to drive in New Mexico.

Torraco, an Albuquerque lawyer, has pushed for numerous types of criminal justice reform. She told *NM Political Report* that New Mexico is one of the only states that does not have a provision for driving under the influence with a minor in the vehicle. She said she is optimistic about introducing her bill again in 2016.

She said she thinks Gov. Susana Martinez is going to make the upcoming 30 day session a

“tough on crime session” which will likely mean Torraco’s bill will have a chance.

“If there’s an opening I’ll introduce it,” Torraco said.

Pacheco sponsored HB 303 which would have allowed a search warrant for blood tests as long as there is probably cause to suspect a driver is under the influence. Current law says a search warrant for testing can only occur if there is probably cause a driver was responsible for death or great bodily harm.

Pacheco, a former law enforcement officer, could not be reached for comment. His response will be added when we receive it.

Torraco said that while she worked with MADD in drafting the legislation, she did not know until Tuesday morning that she was named by the group.

“It’s a huge honor,” Torraco said of her recognition. “I’m really surprised.”

NM Political Report reached out to Gov. Susana Martinez, who often pushes for tougher criminal penalties. On Tuesday, she announced more TV and radio commercials aimed at ending DWI in the state. We will add her response when we receive it.

The upcoming 2016 Legislative session will primarily focus on budget issues, but Gov. Susana Martinez can add non-budget legislation to “the call.”

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