

May 6, 2022

The Honorable Michael V. Nelson
Chair, State Government Finance and Elections Committee
State Office Building, Room 585

The Honorable Mary Kiffmeyer
Chair, State Government Finance and Policy and Elections Committee
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 3103

The Honorable Frank Hornstein
Chair, Transportation Finance and Policy Committee
State Office Building, Room 545

The Honorable Scott J. Newman
Chair, Transportation Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 3105

RE: Reintegration Driver's License bill
Senate File 4458 (Osmek), House File 4571 (Pinto)
Included in House File 4293, 3rd Engrossment, Article 13, Section 37

“The sooner ex-offenders are employed, the less likely they will commit future crimes resulting in further jail and prison time.”

*- “Prison-to-Work: The Benefits of Intensive Job-Search Assistance for Former Inmates,”
Manhattan Institute, 2015.*

Dear Chair Newman, Chair Hornstein, Chair Kiffmeyer, Chair Nelson, and Conferees,

I'm writing on behalf of the 135 members of the Minnesota Asset Building Coalition to urge you to include the **Reintegration Driver's License** provision in your Conference Report. This bill creates a temporary driver's license option for Minnesotans striving to reintegrate into their communities upon release from incarceration and whose driver's license is suspended or revoked for fines or minor traffic violations incurred prior to incarceration.

A valid driver's license is a critical tool to support successful reentry outcomes and reduce recidivism. Upon release from incarceration, individuals face unique challenges combined with elevated scrutiny for compliance with the conditions of their release. Establishing stable housing and employment are associated with positive reentry outcomes, but many housing and employment options are unavailable to them due to their conviction history. Requirements of their supervision may include attending treatment or counseling, completing community service, and meeting with their parole officer. Additionally, many individuals are working on reunifying with children or other family members.

A suspended or revoked driver's license creates a no-win situation. About 30% of Minnesotans released from incarceration have a driver's license that is suspended or revoked due to unpaid fines or minor traffic violations incurred prior to incarceration. Lifting the hold on their license often requires the payment of hundreds or thousands of dollars, which is impossible for many of these individuals. Driving on a suspended or revoked license constitutes a violation of their release, with the associated

consequences. But many individuals cannot successfully establish housing and employment and meet the other requirements of their release without driving, especially if they live in rural Minnesota.

The Reintegration Driver's License bill creates a clear distinction between those whose license is suspended or revoked for fines or minor traffic violations, and dangerous drivers. Individuals whose license is subject to any of the below are **NOT ELIGIBLE** for a Reintegration Driver's License:

- Required to use ignition interlock
- Canceled as Inimical to Public Safety (IPS)
- Criminal Vehicular Operation and subject to a statutory waiting period
- Unresolved hold for nonpayment of child support

The Reintegration Driver's License creates an opportunity for individuals who have served their time to make a fresh start. This chance for success contributes to public safety by creating a strong incentive to avoid new violations that would lead to a cancellation of the license. It reduces the burden on taxpayers by reducing recidivism, benefits employers in a time when reliable employees are an employer's biggest asset – and most important, it reaffirms the humanity of the individual, the possibility for change, and the hope for a better future.

Sincerely,

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