



## Volunteers of America Residential Reentry Center

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

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

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

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

My name is Cheryl Turitto, I am the Employment Specialist /Program Coordinator at Volunteers of America Reentry Centers at both Lake Street and Roseville Facilities. I have worked in reentry for the past 12 years.

I believe that legal transportation is crucial to the success of the men and women that I work with that are coming out of incarceration. The men and women that I work with are typically at our facility for up to 8 months. From the time they arrive the majority do not have a drivers license. Their license has either expired, they have never driven legally, or they have fines. Most of these men and women come out seeking a new direction and real change in their lives beginning with getting their driver's license and getting a decent job. However, they are met with significant barriers to accomplishing the real change they so desire.

I have had individuals that have fines after being incarcerated for several years, when they come out, they are looking for a clean start. They get a job, pay the fines, only to find out that paying the fines, means that they are pleading guilty and risk losing their license up to 1 year.

Many men and women coming out of incarceration turn down good paying jobs due to lack of transportation and the inability to get a license reinstated.

This is a story that is all too common for the men and women that I work with. When someone coming out of incarceration has exhausted all that they can do, they start to make poor decisions. They may choose to drive un-licensed. When family is no longer willing or able to drive them, they turn to old friends to get around. They also start to lose the hope that they had for real change.



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This creates a vacuum effect in their lives, and essentially feeds a revolving door of increased risk of repeated incarceration and involvement with the justice system.

To have successful transition from incarceration back into community, and to give our men and women a real chance for change, I am in favor of the legislation and support of the Reintegration License Legislation House file 4571.

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