



MINNESOTA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
MINNESOTA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL
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May 4, 2021

The Honorable Scott J. Newman, Chair
Transportation Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3105
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Frank Hornstein, Chair
Transportation Finance and Policy Committee
545 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Newman, Chair Hornstein, and Members of the Conference Committee,

The Joint Religious Legislative Coalition submits this letter in support of the provisions in HF336/SF432 that would stop the current practice of suspending a person's driver's license for nonpayment of a fine. Unpaid tickets or citations would continue to be turned over to the Department of Revenue for collection.

In our churches, synagogues and mosques, we see the financial challenges that many individuals and families face. We hear from those struggling to make rent and car payments, to buy healthy food, to meet basic needs and to pay overdue bills. An unexpected ticket, while manageable for some households, can be insurmountable for low-income Minnesotans. In many cases, nonpayment is a direct result of inability to pay.

These Minnesotans currently face loss of their license – not as a result of reckless conduct but because of financial stress. Due to work and familial obligations, some feel compelled to continue to drive with a suspended license. Others must leave employment, either because their work requires driving or because they cannot get to work without a valid license. In much of Minnesota, the lack of public transportation makes this an impossible situation. And the increasing costs once a license is suspended (reinstatement fees, increased insurance rates) create even more challenges.

All of our faith traditions call us to pursue justice and we appreciate your commitment to this same goal. Stated simply, current law isn't just – it is unfairly punitive and has a significant and disproportionate impact on low-income Minnesotans and Black, Indigenous and other Minnesotans of color.

We urge you to include these provisions in your final bill.

Sincerely,

Anne Krisnik, Executive Director