



Representative Louis W. Blessing, III  
Sponsor Testimony HB 158  
April 9, 2019

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Chairman Green, Vice Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and Members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on House Bill 158. This bill does two things:

- Explicitly allows courts to grant limited driving privileges to a first offender driver whose license is suspended because of failure to maintain proof of financial responsibility (car insurance).
- Waives the filing fee to petition for these driving privileges if the person applies to be qualified as an indigent litigant.

The purpose of this bill is to relieve some financial burden on low-income drivers who are trying to provide for themselves and their families. Imagine a driver who already cannot afford basic car insurance is pulled over and has driving privileges revoked due to the lack of insurance. Now, on top of now paying for an insurance plan, this person must pay off the court fees in order to drive legally again. This person must decide if driving to work is worth the risk of being pulled over again and having even harsher legal and financial consequences.

HB 158 would let courts grant limited driving privileges, such as driving to and from work, so that these individuals can make and save enough money to pay off the fees incurred while previously driving uninsured. The important part of the bill is it would waive the fees to apply for limited privileges. Some courts throughout the state do have a process to grant limited driving privileges, however the application costs just as much, if not more, money as the initial fee, thus making the process pointless for the applicant.

The goal of this legislation is to keep drivers safe, without forcing low-income individuals to collect a mountain of fees in the process. I want to help people support

themselves and avoid incurring additional financial burden. I believe this bill encourages people to make responsible and safe choices.

Chairman Green and Members of the Committee, thank you for your consideration of HB 159. I am happy to answer any questions from the committee.