

H.B. 285 – Proponent Testimony  
Judge Brian F. Hagan, Rocky River Municipal Court

Chair Green, Vice Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and Members of the Committee:

I am Judge Brian F. Hagan of the Rocky River Municipal Court, and I am pleased to present testimony in support of H.B. 285, which would make permanent the driver's license reinstatement fee amnesty program that is currently operating as a temporary pilot program.

As a municipal court judge, every day I see people come before me who need to be able to drive legally, but the only thing preventing that is the often exorbitant reinstatement fees they have amassed. What begins as a single suspension can result in years of non-legal driving status, as, too often, people will continue to drive, usually out of necessity, and when caught for doing so, find themselves in a cycle that can be inescapable due to exorbitant reinstatement fees and requirements. As a judge, I want nothing more than for people to be driving *legally*, and we have seen the positive impact that the amnesty program has had on this goal.

I have consulted with my court's probation department on the efficacy of the amnesty program, and the consensus is that it has been a tremendous success thus far. While we do not have statistics on the number of people in our DUS Diversion program participants and probationers who were granted amnesty, we estimate that one out of every four people who applied had some, if not all, of their reinstatement fees waived. Some people who do not qualify now, due to active suspensions, will more than likely qualify later should the program be made permanent.

The amnesty program has also been an excellent motivator for people with suspended licenses. We have seen many people with very large amounts owed in reinstatement fees (sometimes in excess of \$2,000) who previously had the mindset that they will never be able to repay it, so why bother trying? Now, the amnesty program brings hope, and people become motivated to obtain a valid license, breaking the cycle of repeat DUS charges.

I am happy to support H.B. 285, and I urge the committee to adopt it.