### As Reported by the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee

## **133rd General Assembly**

# Regular Session 2019-2020

H. B. No. 158

#### **Representative Blessing**

Cosponsors: Representatives Green, McClain, Sheehy, Jones, Manning, G.

## A BILL

То	amend section 4509.101 of the Revised Code to	1
	waive the fee for filing a petition for limited	2
	driving privileges for an individual who	3
	qualifies as indigent and whose license is	4
	suspended as a result of failure to maintain	5
	proof of financial responsibility, and to	6
	authorize a court to grant such limited driving	7
	privileges on a first offense.	8

#### BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That section 4509.101 of the Revised Code be	9
amended to read as follows:	10
Sec. 4509.101. (A) (1) No person shall operate, or permit	11
the operation of, a motor vehicle in this state, unless proof of	12
financial responsibility is maintained continuously throughout	13
the registration period with respect to that vehicle, or, in the	14
case of a driver who is not the owner, with respect to that	15
driver's operation of that vehicle.	1,6
(2) Whoever violates division (A)(1) of this section shall	17
be subject to the following civil penalties:	18

- (a) Subject to divisions (A)(2)(b) and (c) of this 19 section, a class (F) suspension of the person's driver's 20 license, commercial driver's license, temporary instruction 21 permit, probationary license, or nonresident operating privilege 22 for the period of time specified in division (B)(6) of section 2.3 4510.02 of the Revised Code and impoundment of the person's 2.4 license. The court may grant limited driving privileges to the 25 person, but only if the person presents proof of financial 26 responsibility and is enrolled in a reinstatement fee payment 27 plan pursuant to section 4510.10 of the Revised Code. 28
- (b) If, within five years of the violation, the person's 29 operating privileges are again suspended and the person's 30 license again is impounded for a violation of division (A)(1) of 31 this section, a class C suspension of the person's driver's 32 license, commercial driver's license, temporary instruction 33 permit, probationary license, or nonresident operating privilege 34 for the period of time specified in division (B)(3) of section 35 4510.02 of the Revised Code. The court may grant limited driving 36 privileges to the person only if the person presents proof of 37 financial responsibility and has complied with division (A)(5) 38 of this section, and no court may grant limited driving 39 privileges for the first fifteen days of the suspension. 40
- (c) If, within five years of the violation, the person's 41 operating privileges are suspended and the person's license is 42 impounded two or more times for a violation of division (A)(1) 43 of this section, a class B suspension of the person's driver's 44 license, commercial driver's license, temporary instruction 45 permit, probationary license, or nonresident operating privilege 46 for the period of time specified in division (B)(2) of section 47 4510.02 of the Revised Code. The court may grant limited driving 48 privileges to the person only if the person presents proof of 49

(b) The person receives a traffic ticket indicating that

proof of the maintenance of financial responsibility was not

produced upon the request of a peace officer or state highway

patrol trooper made in accordance with division (D)(2) of this

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section.	79
(c) Whenever, in accordance with rules adopted by the	80
registrar, the person is randomly selected by the registrar and	81
requested to provide such verification.	82
(4) An order of the registrar that suspends and impounds a	83
license or registration, or both, shall state the date on or	84
before which the person is required to surrender the person's	85
license or certificate of registration and license plates. The	86
person is deemed to have surrendered the license or certificate	87
of registration and license plates, in compliance with the	88
order, if the person does either of the following:	89
(a) On or before the date specified in the order,	90
personally delivers the license or certificate of registration	91
and license plates, or causes the delivery of the items, to the	92
registrar;	93
(b) Mails the license or certificate of registration and	94
license plates to the registrar in an envelope or container	95
bearing a postmark showing a date no later than the date	96
specified in the order.	97
(5) Except as provided in division (A)(6) or (L) of this	98
section, the registrar shall not restore any operating	99
privileges or registration rights suspended under this section,	100
return any license, certificate of registration, or license	101
plates impounded under this section, or reissue license plates	102
under section 4503.232 of the Revised Code, if the registrar	103
destroyed the impounded license plates under that section, or	104
reissue a license under section 4510.52 of the Revised Code, if	105
the registrar destroyed the suspended license under that	106
section, unless the rights are not subject to suspension or	107

(6) If the registrar issues an order under division (A)(2)

of this section resulting from the failure of a person to

respond to a financial responsibility random verification

request under division (A)(3)(c) of this section and the person

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certificate of registration and license plates have been impounded or are under an order of impoundment, or whose license has been suspended or is under an order of suspension; the serial number of the person's license; the serial numbers of the person's certificate of registration and license plates; and the person's social security account number, if assigned, or, where the motor vehicle is used for hire or principally in connection with any established business, the person's federal taxpayer identification number. The information shall be recorded in such a manner that it becomes a part of the person's permanent record, and assists the registrar in monitoring compliance with the orders of suspension or impoundment.

- (d) Send written notification to every person to whom the order pertains, at the person's last known address as shown on the records of the bureau. The person, within ten days after the date of the mailing of the notification, shall surrender to the registrar, in a manner set forth in division (A) (4) of this section, any certificate of registration and registration plates under an order of impoundment, or any license under an order of suspension.
- (2) The registrar shall issue any order under division (B)

  (1) of this section without a hearing. Any person adversely affected by the order, within ten days after the issuance of the order, may request an administrative hearing before the registrar, who shall provide the person with an opportunity for a hearing in accordance with this paragraph. A request for a hearing does not operate as a suspension of the order. The scope of the hearing shall be limited to whether the person in fact demonstrated to the registrar proof of financial responsibility in accordance with this section. The registrar shall determine the date, time, and place of any hearing, provided that the

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hearing shall be held, and an order issued or findings made, within thirty days after the registrar receives a request for a hearing. If requested by the person in writing, the registrar may designate as the place of hearing the county seat of the county in which the person resides or a place within fifty miles of the person's residence. The person shall pay the cost of the hearing before the registrar, if the registrar's order of suspension or impoundment is upheld.

- (C) Any order of suspension or impoundment issued under 205 this section or division (B) of section 4509.37 of the Revised 206 Code may be terminated at any time if the registrar determines 207 upon a showing of proof of financial responsibility that the 208 operator or owner of the motor vehicle was in compliance with 209 division (A)(1) of this section at the time of the traffic 210 offense, motor vehicle inspection, or accident that resulted in 211 the order against the person. A determination may be made 212 without a hearing. This division does not apply unless the 213 person shows good cause for the person's failure to present 214 satisfactory proof of financial responsibility to the registrar 215 prior to the issuance of the order. 216
- (D) (1) For the purpose of enforcing this section, every 217 peace officer is deemed an agent of the registrar. 218
- (a) Except as provided in division (D)(1)(b) of this 219 section, any peace officer who, in the performance of the peace 220 officer's duties as authorized by law, becomes aware of a person 221 whose license is under an order of suspension, or whose 222 certificate of registration and license plates are under an 223 order of impoundment, pursuant to this section, may confiscate 224 the license, certificate of registration, and license plates, 225 and return them to the registrar. 226

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- (b) Any peace officer who, in the performance of the peace 227 officer's duties as authorized by law, becomes aware of a person 228 whose license is under an order of suspension, or whose 229 certificate of registration and license plates are under an 230 order of impoundment resulting from failure to respond to a 2.31 financial responsibility random verification, shall not, for 232 that reason, arrest the owner or operator or seize the vehicle 233 or license plates. Instead, the peace officer shall issue a 234 citation for a violation of section 4510.16 of the Revised Code 235 236 specifying the circumstances as failure to respond to a financial responsibility random verification. 237
- (2) A peace officer shall request the owner or operator of a motor vehicle to produce proof of financial responsibility in a manner described in division (G) of this section at the time the peace officer acts to enforce the traffic laws of this state and during motor vehicle inspections conducted pursuant to section 4513.02 of the Revised Code.
- (3) A peace officer shall indicate on every traffic ticket 244 whether the person receiving the traffic ticket produced proof 245 of the maintenance of financial responsibility in response to 246 the officer's request under division (D)(2) of this section. The 247 peace officer shall inform every person who receives a traffic 248 ticket and who has failed to produce proof of the maintenance of 249 financial responsibility that the person must submit proof to 250 the traffic violations bureau with any payment of a fine and 251 costs for the ticketed violation or, if the person is to appear 252 in court for the violation, the person must submit proof to the 253 court. 254
- (4) (a) If a person who has failed to produce proof of the 255 maintenance of financial responsibility appears in court for a 256

ticketed violation, the court may permit the defendant to 257 present evidence of proof of financial responsibility to the 258 court at such time and in such manner as the court determines to 259 be necessary or appropriate. In a manner prescribed by the 260 registrar, the clerk of courts shall provide the registrar with 2.61 the identity of any person who fails to submit proof of the 2.62 maintenance of financial responsibility pursuant to division (D) 263 (3) of this section. 264

- (b) If a person who has failed to produce proof of the

  maintenance of financial responsibility also fails to submit

  that proof to the traffic violations bureau with payment of a

  fine and costs for the ticketed violation, the traffic

  violations bureau, in a manner prescribed by the registrar,

  shall notify the registrar of the identity of that person.

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- (5) (a) Upon receiving notice from a clerk of courts or 271 traffic violations bureau pursuant to division (D)(4) of this 272 section, the registrar shall order the suspension of the license 273 of the person required under division (A)(2)(a), (b), or (c) of 274 this section and the impoundment of the person's certificate of 275 registration and license plates required under division (A)(2) 276 (d) of this section, effective thirty days after the date of the 277 mailing of notification. The registrar also shall notify the 278 person that the person must present the registrar with proof of 279 financial responsibility in accordance with this section, 280 surrender to the registrar the person's certificate of 281 registration, license plates, and license, or submit a statement 282 subject to section 2921.13 of the Revised Code that the person 283 did not operate or permit the operation of the motor vehicle at 284 the time of the offense. Notification shall be in writing and 285 shall be sent to the person at the person's last known address 286 as shown on the records of the bureau of motor vehicles. The 287

person, within fifteen days after the date of the mailing of notification, shall present proof of financial responsibility, surrender the certificate of registration, license plates, and license to the registrar in a manner set forth in division (A) (4) of this section, or submit the statement required under this section together with other information the person considers appropriate.

If the registrar does not receive proof or the person does not surrender the certificate of registration, license plates, and license, in accordance with this division, the registrar shall permit the order for the suspension of the license of the person and the impoundment of the person's certificate of registration and license plates to take effect.

- (b) In the case of a person who presents, within the fifteen-day period, proof of financial responsibility, the registrar shall terminate the order of suspension and the impoundment of the registration and license plates required under division (A)(2)(d) of this section and shall send written notification to the person, at the person's last known address as shown on the records of the bureau.
- (c) Any person adversely affected by the order of the registrar under division (D)(5)(a) or (b) of this section, within ten days after the issuance of the order, may request an administrative hearing before the registrar, who shall provide the person with an opportunity for a hearing in accordance with this paragraph. A request for a hearing does not operate as a suspension of the order. The scope of the hearing shall be limited to whether, at the time of the hearing, the person presents proof of financial responsibility covering the vehicle and whether the person is eligible for an exemption in

accordance with this section or any rule adopted under it. The registrar shall determine the date, time, and place of any hearing; provided, that the hearing shall be held, and an order issued or findings made, within thirty days after the registrar receives a request for a hearing. If requested by the person in writing, the registrar may designate as the place of hearing the county seat of the county in which the person resides or a place within fifty miles of the person's residence. Such person shall pay the cost of the hearing before the registrar, if the registrar's order of suspension or impoundment under division (D)(5)(a) or (b) of this section is upheld. 

- (6) A peace officer may charge an owner or operator of a motor vehicle with a violation of section 4510.16 of the Revised Code when the owner or operator fails to show proof of the maintenance of financial responsibility pursuant to a peace officer's request under division (D)(2) of this section, if a check of the owner or operator's driving record indicates that the owner or operator, at the time of the operation of the motor vehicle, is required to file and maintain proof of financial responsibility under section 4509.45 of the Revised Code for a previous violation of this chapter.
- (7) Any forms used by law enforcement agencies in administering this section shall be prescribed, supplied, and paid for by the registrar.
- (8) No peace officer, law enforcement agency employing a peace officer, or political subdivision or governmental agency that employs a peace officer shall be liable in a civil action for damages or loss to persons arising out of the performance of any duty required or authorized by this section.
  - (9) As used in this section, "peace officer" has the

meaning set forth in section 2935.01 of the Revised Code.

(E) All fees, except court costs, fees paid to a deputy registrar, and those portions of the financial responsibility reinstatement fees as otherwise specified in this division, collected under this section shall be paid into the state treasury to the credit of the public safety - highway purposes fund established in section 4501.06 of the Revised Code and used to cover costs incurred by the bureau in the administration of this section and sections 4503.20, 4507.212, and 4509.81 of the Revised Code, and by any law enforcement agency employing any peace officer who returns any license, certificate of registration, and license plates to the registrar pursuant to division (C) of this section. 

Of each financial responsibility reinstatement fee the registrar collects pursuant to division (A)(5)(a) of this section or receives from a deputy registrar under division (A)(5)(d) of this section, the registrar shall deposit twenty-five dollars of each one-hundred-dollar reinstatement fee, fifty dollars of each three-hundred-dollar reinstatement fee, and one hundred dollars of each six-hundred-dollar reinstatement fee into the state treasury to the credit of the indigent defense support fund created by section 120.08 of the Revised Code.

- (F) Chapter 119. of the Revised Code applies to this section only to the extent that any provision in that chapter is not clearly inconsistent with this section.
- (G)(1)(a) The registrar, court, traffic violations bureau, or peace officer may require proof of financial responsibility to be demonstrated by use of a standard form prescribed by the registrar. If the use of a standard form is not required, a person may demonstrate proof of financial responsibility under

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court or the bureau, by reason of circumstances in a particular	406
case, may consider appropriate.	407
(3) A motor carrier certificated by the interstate	408
commerce commission or by the public utilities commission may	409
demonstrate proof of financial responsibility by providing a	410
statement designating the motor carrier's operating authority	411
and averring that the insurance coverage required by the	412
certificating authority is in full force and effect.	413
(4)(a) A finding by the registrar or court that a person	414
is covered by proof of financial responsibility in the form of	415
an insurance policy or surety bond is not binding upon the named	416
insurer or surety or any of its officers, employees, agents, or	417
representatives and has no legal effect except for the purpose	418
of administering this section.	419
(b) The preparation and delivery of a financial	420
responsibility identification card or any other document	421
authorized to be used as proof of financial responsibility and	422
the generation and delivery of proof of financial responsibility	423
to an electronic wireless communications device that is	424
displayed on the device as text or images does not do any of the	425
following:	426
(i) Create any liability or estoppel against an insurer or	427
surety, or any of its officers, employees, agents, or	428
representatives;	429
(ii) Constitute an admission of the existence of, or of	430
any liability or coverage under, any policy or bond;	431
(iii) Waive any defenses or counterclaims available to an	432
insurer, surety, agent, employee, or representative in an action	433
commenced by an insured or third-party claimant upon a cause of	434

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action alleged to have arisen under an insurance policy or surety bond or by reason of the preparation and delivery of a document for use as proof of financial responsibility or the generation and delivery of proof of financial responsibility to an electronic wireless communications device.

- (c) Whenever it is determined by a final judgment in a 440 judicial proceeding that an insurer or surety, which has been 441 named on a document or displayed on an electronic wireless 442 communications device accepted by a court or the registrar as 443 444 proof of financial responsibility covering the operation of a motor vehicle at the time of an accident or offense, is not 445 liable to pay a judgment for injuries or damages resulting from 446 such operation, the registrar, notwithstanding any previous 447 contrary finding, shall forthwith suspend the operating 448 privileges and registration rights of the person against whom 449 the judgment was rendered as provided in division (A)(2) of this 450 section. 451
- (H) In order for any document or display of text or images 452 on an electronic wireless communications device described in 453 division (G)(1) of this section to be used for the demonstration 454 of proof of financial responsibility under this section, the 455 document or words or images shall state the name of the insured 456 or obligor, the name of the insurer or surety company, and the 457 effective and expiration dates of the financial responsibility, 458 and designate by explicit description or by appropriate 459 reference all motor vehicles covered which may include a 460 reference to fleet insurance coverage. 461
- (I) For purposes of this section, "owner" does not include 462 a licensed motor vehicle leasing dealer as defined in section 463 4517.01 of the Revised Code, but does include a motor vehicle 464

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renting dealer as defined in section 4549.65 of the Revised	465
Code. Nothing in this section or in section 4509.51 of the	466
Revised Code shall be construed to prohibit a motor vehicle	467
renting dealer from entering into a contractual agreement with a	468
person whereby the person renting the motor vehicle agrees to be	469
solely responsible for maintaining proof of financial	470
responsibility, in accordance with this section, with respect to	471
the operation, maintenance, or use of the motor vehicle during	472
the period of the motor vehicle's rental.	473

- (J) The purpose of this section is to require the maintenance of proof of financial responsibility with respect to the operation of motor vehicles on the highways of this state, so as to minimize those situations in which persons are not compensated for injuries and damages sustained in motor vehicle accidents. The general assembly finds that this section contains reasonable civil penalties and procedures for achieving this purpose.
- (K) Nothing in this section shall be construed to be subject to section 4509.78 of the Revised Code.
- (L) (1) The registrar may terminate any suspension imposed under this section and not require the owner to comply with divisions (A)(5)(a), (b), and (c) of this section if the registrar with or without a hearing determines that the owner of the vehicle has established by clear and convincing evidence that all of the following apply:
- (a) The owner customarily maintains proof of financial 490 responsibility. 491
- (b) Proof of financial responsibility was not in effect 492 for the vehicle on the date in question for one of the following 493

reasons:	
(i) The vehicle was inoperable.	495
(ii) The vehicle is operated only seasonally, and the date	496
in question was outside the season of operation.	497
(iii) A person other than the vehicle owner or driver was	498
at fault for the lapse of proof of financial responsibility	499
through no fault of the owner or driver.	
(iv) The lapse of proof of financial responsibility was	501
caused by excusable neglect under circumstances that are not	502
likely to recur and do not suggest a purpose to evade the	503
requirements of this chapter.	504
(2) The registrar may grant an owner or driver relief for	505
a reason specified in division (L)(1)(b)(i) or (ii) of this	506
section whenever the owner or driver is randomly selected to	507
verify the existence of proof of financial responsibility for	508
such a vehicle. However, the registrar may grant an owner or	509
driver relief for a reason specified in division (L)(1)(b)(iii)	510
or (iv) of this section only if the owner or driver has not	511
previously been granted relief under division (L)(1)(b)(iii) or	512
(iv) of this section.	513
(M) The registrar shall adopt rules in accordance with	514
Chapter 119. of the Revised Code that are necessary to	515
administer and enforce this section. The rules shall include	516
procedures for the surrender of license plates upon failure to	517
maintain proof of financial responsibility and provisions	518
relating to reinstatement of registration rights, acceptable	519
forms of proof of financial responsibility, the use of an	520
electronic wireless communications device to present proof of	521
financial responsibility, and verification of the existence of	522

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financial responsibility during the period of registration.	523
(N)(1) When a person utilizes an electronic wireless	524
communications device to present proof of financial	525
responsibility, only the evidence of financial responsibility	526
displayed on the device shall be viewed by the registrar, peace	527
officer, employee or official of the traffic violations bureau,	528
or the court. No other content of the device shall be viewed for	529
purposes of obtaining proof of financial responsibility.	530
(2) When a person provides an electronic wireless	531
communications device to the registrar, a peace officer, an	532
employee or official of a traffic violations bureau, or the	533
court, the person assumes the risk of any resulting damage to	534
the device unless the registrar, peace officer, employee, or	535
official, or court personnel purposely, knowingly, or recklessly	536
commits an action that results in damage to the device.	537
Section 2. That existing section 4509.101 of the Revised	538
Code is hereby repealed.	539