

Date: 11/18/2015

To: Members of Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Subject: Witness Testimony - Support for S.B. No. 204

Unfortunately my son, Eric, made some bad choices at the age of 16 that led him into a life of drug addiction and his arrest at age 19 for trafficking and possession. The good news is that he has completed his second rehab and has finally made a turn toward the good. However, because of the choices my son made, he now has an adult felony drug record and the related driving suspensions on his driving record that he is forced to deal with in many areas of his life including his ability to get affordable car insurance and to gain long-term employment. This felony record has been compounded by the way his one arrest was processed through the court system. His one arrest in September of 2014 turned into three separate cases. The three cases were broke down as follows:

1. Misdemeanor possession charges were filed Sept 2014 by the City of Shelby that came as a result of Eric granting permission to search his room (knowing they would find drugs). Eric pled guilty Sept. 2014
2. Felony trafficking charges were filed Sept. 2014 by Richland County that came from the arrest warrant they came to serve on the day of his arrest. Eric pled guilty Oct. 2014
3. Additional felony charges for aggravated trafficking were filed, Jan. 2015, four months after Eric's original arrest. These additional charges came from lab results initiated by the City of Shelby on some of what they found in the search of his room during the original arrest in Sept 2014. Eric pled guilty June 2015.

Because Eric's one arrest was split into three cases he now has three mandatory driving suspension on his record spread across a nine month period. All of these suspensions go back to the original arrest in Sept. 2014. One arrest should equate to one driving suspension not three as happened with my son.

The driving suspensions from the first two cases were not initially a huge problem because both judges involved in those first two cases were willing to grant Eric driving privileges for work and other court required appointments. But, then Eric was hit by the collateral consequences that came as a result of the three cases that created three mandatory driving suspensions on his record. The following are some of the collateral consequences he is now dealing with:

1. Insurance on his 2006 Pontiac G6 that he purchased at age 17 jumped to \$750 per month. He obviously could not afford this and caused him to lose his ability to drive.
2. Many insurance companies including the insurance company I work for will not even insure Eric because he has 17 points on his license just from the three driving suspensions.
3. I looked into selling Eric a 2002 VW Jetta with 198,000 miles and the best price he could get from the few that were willing to insure him with his 17+ points would still cost \$180 per month for liability only.
4. Because Eric's single arrest was split into 3 cases spread across 9 months, the background checks that employers receive look like Eric is a repeat offender. This inaccurate appearance that Eric is a repeat offender is adding to the height of the hurdle he already faces in his employment search with his felony convictions.

In closing, I support S.B. No. 204 because it would keep the unrelated mandatory driving suspension off the record of those with drug convictions. This would remove several of the hurdles like those my son, Eric, is currently having to deal with on his road to recovery from his drug addiction that started when he was 16.

Sincerely,

Gary Lauderbaugh