

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: _____

Name: _____

Are you representing: Yourself ☐ Organization ☐

Organization (If Applicable): _____

Position/Title: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Best Contact Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes ☐ No ☐

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): _____

Specific Issue: _____

Are you testifying as a: Proponent ☐ Opponent ☐ Interested Party ☐

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes ☐ No ☐

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? _____

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.

December 9, 2024

Chairman Haraz Ghanbari
House Homeland Security Committee
77 S. High St, Columbus, OH 43215

Chairman Ghanbari, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Thomas, and Members of the House Homeland Security Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 37. I support this legislation because ending the practice of debt-based driver's license suspensions in Ohio is the logical, equitable thing to do.

It's logical because – if the ultimate goal is that people will pay their court debt, they must have reliable transportation to their workplace. According to the US Census Bureau, more than 80% of Ohioans drive to work. How can we expect people to pay their debts if they don't have a way to get to work?

It's equitable because – the current practice of suspending a person's driver's license solely because they cannot pay their court debt is income discrimination. First and foremost, it is not a crime to be poor. Despite that, the financial burden of debt-related suspension costs is disproportionately borne by people living in Ohio's poorest zip codes ("Road to Nowhere: Debt-Related Driver's License Suspensions in Ohio" by The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland).

In summary, debt-based driver's license suspensions are a counterproductive practice. If the goal is to ensure debts are paid, there are debt-collection methods that are far more productive, such as implementing a payment plan or garnishing wages.

I hope that you will consider the positive impact this legislation could have on more than 1 million individuals with suspended licenses in our state. In passing this bill, Ohio would join more than 20 other states that have already moved away from these debt-related penalties.

The people of Ohio deserve logical, equitable laws – and supporting SB 37 is one step in the right direction.

Sincerely,

Claire Bruner
University Heights, OH