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Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, and Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to give sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 37. Some members of the Committee might remember this bill as Senate Bill 301 from the 134th General Assembly. This bill makes a number of changes involving driver's license suspension penalties.

There is no question that driving is crucial for daily life for most Ohioans. Outside of city centers, it is difficult to rely solely on public transportation, and using Lyft or Uber becomes expensive very quickly. Under current Ohio law, there are almost 70 violations that can result in someone losing their driver's license. Unfortunately, these penalties often impact low income individuals and families the hardest. Imagine a person is convicted of something that has nothing to do with driving, for example drug possession, and has their driver's license suspended. Just like that, their ability to drive to work, take their child to school, go to a medical appointment, or pick up groceries has been severely diminished, if not completely vanished. Now this person has been put in the impossible scenario of deciding whether to comply with the penalty or to take the risk of incurring more penalties so they can simply complete necessary daily tasks.

Senate Bill 37 does not make any changes to driver's license suspensions when the violations involve driving. We are only looking at offenses that are unrelated to a person's ability to drive.

With any drug offense, if the highest degree of penalty is a misdemeanor, SB 37 removes the driver's license suspension entirely. If the highest degree of penalty for the offense is a felony, the bill removes the driver's license suspension for all, except for those who are convicted of or plead guilty to the highest degree of felony imposed for the offense. (The chart in LSC's bill analysis details when a court may impose a license suspension for each of these offenses.) SB 37 also allows for a person whose license has already been suspended for certain misdemeanor drug offenses to apply to the court to terminate the suspension.

One of the other offenses that can result in a driver's license suspension is failure to pay child support. However, since this is tied to federal law and funding, we cannot eliminate the possibility of suspension. Instead, SB 37 allows a person to present evidence to the child support enforcement agency demonstrating that a driver's license suspension would effectively prevent that person from paying child support. Additionally, the bill authorizes a person to petition the court for limited driving privileges at any point, not just during a contempt proceeding as under current law. If the goal is to help a child financially, surely removing a parent's access to employment is counterintuitive.

Finally, SB 37 reduces penalties when a driver is unable to provide proof of insurance. The language decreases the lookback period for repeat offenses from five years to one year and eliminates the suspension of a person's vehicle registration rights and impoundment of the certificate of registration and license plates as penalties for the offense.

The goal of Senate Bill 37 is not to eliminate consequences for people's actions, but our current system of penalties often sets people up for failure without a chance to

make better choices for themselves. If passed, SB 37 could help people restore and reform their lives instead of entangling them in a lifetime of fees and excessive penalties. Thank you, Chairman Manning and Members of the Committee. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.