



December 12, 2023

Chairman Nathan Manning
Senate Judiciary Committee
1 Capitol Square Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: Senate Bill 37

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, and Ranking Member Hicks Hudson,

I write to you today to extend the Justice Action Network's support of Senate Bill 37, legislation that would reduce barriers for Ohioans to legally drive to work and provide for their families. The bill removes the ability to suspend a person's license for non-driving related issues without eliminating other enforcement mechanisms for payment of fines and fees, for example. Importantly, this bill removes a key barrier to employment—transportation—for hundreds of thousands of hard-working Ohioans and businesses that employ them.

Over 1.5 million Ohioans have their licenses suspended every year for debt-related reasons like a missed traffic ticket. Individuals who have their licenses suspended for failing to pay their ticket for a broken taillight, as one example, have the difficult choice between continuing to drive on a suspended license and risk further interactions with the justice system, or miss work, access to healthcare, childcare, and other necessities because they can no longer legally operate a vehicle in the state. In addition to further penalties, an Ohioan pulled over while driving on a suspended license may have their vehicle towed and may lose access to employment as a result, as so many Ohioans are reliant on their vehicles to get to work.

Suspending a person's license for a non-safety, non-driving related reason harms Ohio's economy and our businesses by preventing individuals from getting to work. Senate Bill 37 moves the state in the right direction by maintaining other enforcement mechanisms for paying fines and fees while allowing individuals to continue driving legally. The bill would also provide a pathway for license reinstatement for individuals whose licenses are currently suspended for these reasons—benefitting Ohio families and its economy greatly.

This is a great bipartisan, pro-safety, pro-workforce bill that will benefit a wide range of Ohioans if passed, and we're thankful to Senators Blessing and Ingram for championing these policies. We urge the committee to support this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren Krisai".

Lauren Krisai
Deputy Director
The Justice Action Network

CC: President Matt Huffman
Minority Leader Nickie J. Antonio
Members, Senate Judiciary Committee