



March 26, 2004

Members of the Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: SB 37, Regards driver's license suspension law; financial responsibility

Dear Chair Manning Vice Chair Reynolds, and Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

Ohio United Ways work across our state to build strong, resilient and equitable communities where all families can thrive.

For most Ohioans, their driver's license is a fundamental part of their participation in the workforce.

Ohio employers are 25 percent more likely to require a driver's license than the national average (14 percent in Ohio vs. 10.6 percent in the US in 2022), according to Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland research. Requiring a license has become more common in recent years, with Ohio outpacing the national average (74 percent growth from 2015 to 2022 in Ohio vs 63.4 percent growth in the US during the same time frame).

Ohio workers also rely on their driver's license to get to and from work, according to the Census Bureau, with 82 percent of Ohioans driving alone.

However, more than 1.7 million Ohio drivers have had their licenses suspended due to unpaid debt. That represents more than 60 percent of all driver's license suspensions. Reasons for these debt-related license suspensions, or DRS, include failing to pay court fines, not having proof of insurance, or missing child support payments.

People with a DRS are not legally allowed to drive anywhere – including work – and could face barriers to getting to work to earn money to pay off their debt. They also cannot get a new job that requires a license.

SB 37, sponsored by Senators Bill Blessing and Catherine Ingram, would reduce the number of reasons why a driver's license could be suspended, focusing on removing offenses unrelated to a person's ability to drive. It would not make any changes to driver's license suspensions that involve driving.

SB 37 will help Ohioans help themselves by removing barriers to serving as productive, responsible members of our society. We urge its passage.

We appreciate your consideration.

(Signatures on next page)

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