



SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE – PROPONENT TESTIMONY, SB 37, 12.13.23

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the committee, thank you for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to provide written testimony.

My name is Hannah Kubbins and I am the Deputy Legislative Director for Americans for Prosperity - Ohio (AFP). As one of the largest grassroots organizations in the country, AFP is driving long-term solutions to some of the country's biggest problems. Our organization, and its activists across Ohio, are dedicated to breaking barriers that stand in the way of people realizing their full potential. That is why we supported SB 37 in its previous form and why we still support the bill with its amended language. Despite the best intentions of lawmakers over the years, our criminal justice system has, in many regards, gradually morphed into a major impediment to individual prosperity over time.

Simply put, SB 37 aims to reduce the number of scenarios wherein driver's licenses can be suspended for actions unrelated to the operation of motor vehicles or the commission of very serious crimes. The purpose of license suspension ought to be to protect people from genuinely dangerous motorists and criminal actors, not to erect barriers to success that needlessly complicate everyday life for individuals who may have made mistakes but otherwise pose little or no threat to their communities.

Additionally, if an individual is in a situation where they owe child support, it stands to reason that using driver's license suspension as a punishment will only hinder that person's ability to get to work efficiently so they can continue to meet their obligations. Smartly reforming the criminal justice system to maintain community safety, but also affording people a real opportunity to make a situation better before burying them in an avalanche of fines, fees, and suspensions will allow more Ohioans to live up to their full potential, and SB 37 is an important step in the right direction.

We appreciate the expansion of SB 37, and without going over every change, I did want to highlight a few of the adjustments we think are most valuable. Allowing an individual to enter into a payment plan with the clerk of court to avoid an arrest warrant for failure to appear or failure to pay a fine enables the court to hold the individual accountable while also understanding that the individual's financial situation can change. A payment plan allows for more flexibility in the event that an individual cannot pay the amount in full.

We also support the lowered reinstatement fee to \$25 for reinstating a driver's license suspended for failure to provide proof of financial responsibility. These fees were originally \$40 for a first offense, \$300 for a second offense, and \$600 for a third or subsequent offense as under current law and the introduced bill.

Finally, creating a standardized 45-day grace period by which a person may provide proof of financial responsibility removes a time-sensitive barrier that could have previously put an individual under more financial stress.

Various bills in this vein have been introduced in past General Assemblies, and we're hopeful that this bill can become law by the end of the 135<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to offer testimony today, and thank you to Senators Blessing and Ingram for taking this step to further the goal of a smart, effective criminal justice system that does not unjustly punish people with sanctions disproportionate to their behavior.