



SUPPORT FOR SB 275 – IMPROVING ACCESS TO RESTRICTED DRIVERS LICENSE AND REMOVING 90-DAY EXTENSION

Testimony of Austin Spillar

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The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Kansas, a membership organization dedicated to preserving and strengthening the constitutional liberties afforded to every resident of Kansas. We work to preserve and strengthen Kansans' constitutional rights and freedoms through policy advocacy, litigation, and education. Kansans have a right to be free from excessive fines and fees and should not be losing their driving privileges because they are too poor. Therefore, we strongly support SB 275.

Kansas has one of the highest rates of DL suspensions in the country.¹ Restrictions on driving licenses, such as suspensions and revocations, have been needlessly keeping people in a cycle of debt and harming their ability to get to work, take their children to school, get healthcare, and do the everyday things that people need to do to be productive. SB 275 can help solve this avoidable problem.

Kansas's public transportation system is inadequate, particularly in the more rural areas of the state. People with suspended licenses continue driving because they have no choice. Each time they get on the road they risk a criminal conviction, more fines and fees they can't afford, and even jail time. SB 275 would provide these Kansans with a pathway to driving legally.

SB 275 will allow people who have had a previous conviction of driving with a suspended license to be eligible for a restricted license to get to work, school, the grocery store, and to be able to acquire the necessities of life. Furthermore, SB 275 will prevent the State from piling on suspension time if a person has more than one conviction. Given the absolute necessity of driving for people in Kansas, people can easily rack up multiple convictions for DL suspension in a short time frame, placing them in a cycle of poverty and further entanglement with the criminal justice system. This problem is significant across the state: As of October 2019, driver's license suspensions in the state numbered over 210,000.² That's 210,000 people whose ability to go about their daily lives and contribute to the state's economic growth is circumscribed by their ability to drive legally.

Kansas needs to place an emphasis on comprehensive driver's license suspension reform. SB 275 is an integral part of that process. **The ACLU of Kansas strongly supports SB 275 and urges this Committee to take action to see that it is passed into law.**

¹ <https://www.freetodrive.org/maps/#page-content>

² KAKE NEWS INVESTIGATES: Avoiding a suspended license as numbers climb, Pilar Pedraza, (October 23, 2019), available at <http://www.kake.com/story/41224567/kake-news-investigates-avoiding-a-suspended-license-as-numbers-climb>

Additional Resources for the Committee:

1. Too Poor to Drive: 6 Truths about Driver's License Suspensions, available at <https://www.freetodrive.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Six-Truths-About-Drivers-License-Suspension.pdf>
2. The Free To Drive campaign is made up of more than 100 organizations across the political spectrum who are calling for an end to debt based driver's license suspension, and to reserve this form of punishment for only dangerous drivers. <https://www.freetodrive.org/about/#page-content>
3. A collection of maps showing the various state laws on driver's license suspensions and exposing the human impact that people have for simply being too poor to pay their fines and fees. <https://www.freetodrive.org/maps/#page-content>
4. KAKE NEWS INVESTIGATES: Suspended drivers licenses raise costs for all drivers <http://www.kake.com/story/41246594/kake-news-investigates-suspended-drivers-licenses-raise-costs-for-all-drivers>