



**AMERICANS FOR
PROSPERITY®**
WEST VIRGINIA

February 13, 2020

Dear Lawmaker:

On behalf of Americans for Prosperity activists across West Virginia, I urge you to **support Senate Bill 563. This vote may be recorded in our 2020 session legislative scorecard.**

Senate Bill 563 will end West Virginia's misguided practice of suspending driver's licenses over unpaid court fines and fees, part of a flawed system that impacts over 11 million Americans.

When West Virginians can't quickly pay their court fines and fees, our state suspends their driver's licenses. This policy disproportionately affects lower-income Mountaineers, forcing too many to choose between losing their jobs by not driving to work or risking jail time and more fines for driving with a suspended license. Reasonable court fines and fees should eventually be paid. But revoking a person's ability to drive hampers their ability to earn the money they need to pay these fines and to provide for their families.

- Being able to drive isn't just a luxury, for most West Virginians, it's crucial. The Census Bureau's American Community Survey shows that [more than 82%](#) of West Virginians drive to work alone.
- People with suspended licenses still need to get to work, which is why over three quarters risk jail by continuing to drive with a suspended license, according to the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators. We shouldn't force people into these difficult situations when their offenses have nothing to do with traffic safety.
- Enforcing non-driving-related driver's license suspension costs thousands of hours in police, administrative, and court processing time, diverting limited public resources that can be helping protect public safety instead.
- Punishments should fit crimes—taking driver's licenses from people who simply can't pay debts quickly is too harsh. Structured payment plans can be a great next step to help people pay their fines and fees in a way tailored to their resources.
- In neighboring Virginia, the Senate just unanimously passed a similar measure to permanently end fine and fee-based driver's license suspensions after a temporary moratorium last year. West Virginia shouldn't be left behind.

Senate Bill 563 will end disproportionate, ineffective punishments that make it harder for people to repay the fines and fees. For these reasons, **I urge you to vote yes in support of S.B. 563.**

Sincerely,

Jason Huffman
West Virginia State Director
Americans for Prosperity