



Thursday, February 11, 2021

Dear Members of the Senate Transportation Finance and Policy Committee,

On behalf of Americans for Prosperity activists across Minnesota, I am writing today to call your attention to the important driver's license suspension reform in SF432 and urge you to support the bill.

The suspension of a driver's license for unpaid debts often triggers a cascading set of difficulties for an individual and their family, including job loss, escalating debt, and increased reliance on publicly funded safety net programs. It is an especially difficult and disproportionate burden placed by government on disadvantaged lower-income communities. Socioeconomic distress can lead people into the criminal justice system, but it is also true that dysfunctions in the criminal justice system can lead people into socioeconomic distress—and driver's license suspensions for conduct unrelated to dangerous driving are a perfect example.

Law enforcement resources should go toward ensuring public safety – not debt collection. Studies have documented an average of nine hours of personnel time to process each traffic stop related to suspended licenses. In Minnesota, that adds up to more than \$10 million in costs to taxpayers for time spent detaining, questioning, and processing individuals who pose no risk to public safety. Every moment that we spend arresting and prosecuting citizens for unpaid debt is a moment spent burning through state resources without any public safety result to show for it.

While this law aims to prevent some of these collateral consequences, it doesn't let offenders off the hook. Minnesota has alternatives already in place to ensure that people are still held accountable for paying their debts, including ongoing collections proceedings and ultimately, garnishments, liens, and revenue recapture. This bill only deals with unpaid debts – it does not change suspensions of licenses under Minnesota's habitual violator law or for any dangerous or negligent driving, including mandatory suspension for DUI. Dangerous or unsafe drivers will still be held to account, but suspensions will be tied to dangerous driving behavior and threats to public safety – NOT to someone's ability to pay.

Thank you for your time and attention to these important issues. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have questions, need more information, or if you would like to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely,

Jason Flohrs  
State Director  
Americans for Prosperity - Minnesota