

Sarah Vlasak

Stillwater, MN

HF103 (Davnier) Driver licensing requirements related to diabetes mellitus repealed

Position: In Favor of Repeal

Dear Mr. Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing today to ask you to vote in favor of HF103; the repeal of the driver licensing requirements related to diabetes mellitus. As a Type 1 Diabetic for nearly 15 years, I have first hand experience of these discriminatory requirements and I urge you to consider the following reasons why it is in our state's best interest to repeal them.

Ever since my diagnosis at the age of 17, I have needed to fill out the yearly driver licensing form that the state requires because of these requirements. And every year, it has led to months of stress and anxiety over it. You see, the form that we are required to have filled out by our doctor is mailed out 30 days ahead of when it's required back to the state. This is where we run into the first problem. Our doctors, endocrinologists (endos), are specialists and there is a shortage in our healthcare system. I have never been able to see an endo without a hefty waiting period, generally around 3-4 months for current patients, but at times up to a year. This hardly fits the requirements of 30 days that the state requires.

Now, some of you may be thinking, 'just fax it to your doctor.' Well, that's a great idea and I do use it myself. But, herein lies our second problem and where we start to unfold the discriminatory nature of these requirements. I am a privileged white woman in many aspects of life, including okay health insurance, a steady income, and higher education, all of which contribute to the reason I'm also privileged in that I have a relationship with my doctor. See, my greater socioeconomic position allows me to visit my doctor on a regular basis, get lab tests as needed, etc. all of which contribute to a relationship with a great doctor. But my fellow Minnesotans who are in a poor socioeconomic position do not have that privilege, for a variety of reasons. They are therefore stuck, waiting to see a doctor in order to get their forms filled out. And that's if they can afford the visit. I hardly find it ethical to force those who need our help most into an even worse position and wellbeing.

In addition to the above issues, the requirements themselves are poor indicators of safe driving capability. One of the main requirements is whether or not someone has had a diabetic 'episode' in the past year. This is hardly an indicator of health. In fact, I've never even heard it used by doctors as an indicator for health and good management of condition. I can also attest that the diabetics I know who have had episodes are the most diligent and in control. Therefore, it is an invalid indicator of driving capabilities and should be repealed.

There are a variety of other reasons that these requirements are discriminatory, which I can't fit into my testimony today, and I hope that you see the plethora of reasons to repeal these requirements.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Vlasak