



May 5, 2021

The Honorable Frank Hornstein, Chair  
Transportation Finance and Policy Committee  
545 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Scott J. Newman, Chair  
Transportation Finance and Policy Committee  
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3105  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**RE: Minnesota Catholic Conference requests adoption of House positions on Driver's License Eligibility and Suspension Reform in HF1684-3**

Chair Newman, Chair Hornstein, and Members of the Conference Committee,

As the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Minnesota, one of the core missions of the Minnesota Catholic Conference is working with political and community leaders to shape legislation that serves human dignity and the common good. We understand that a conference committee's work is not easy, and we commend the progress you have made in your first three meetings. As you begin working towards common ground on the weightier aspects of House and Senate proposals, we would like to highlight two provisions that will promote safety on roadways and accountability for drivers while also promoting family stability. We urge you adopt and include these impactful House positions in your Conference Committee Report:

**Driver's License Suspension Reform**

*Rev. Pages R108, R117, R118, R119, R171, R180 / House Article 6 sections 39, 49-52, 531, 101, 106*

Driver's License Suspension Reform prohibits the suspension of a driver's license for unpaid traffic tickets and makes licenses currently suspended only for unpaid tickets eligible for reinstatement. The underlying bill for provision is from a bipartisan measure authored by Senator Ingebrigtsen (Senate File 432) and Representative Becker-Finn (House File 336). It enjoyed bipartisan support through the committee process.

When a person violates the law, they should be punished. At the same time, license suspensions for payment-related violations primarily impact people with low incomes and little savings. Often, low-income individuals who lose their driving privileges eventually lose their job, which begins a tragic spiral into crippling debt and family distress. The late-payment of fees and fines is not necessarily a threat to public safety, but often a symptom of poverty.

This reform does not change driver's license suspensions for dangerous driving violations and does not eliminate personal responsibility. Unpaid traffic tickets are sent to collections, so people are still held accountable for the cost of their ticket. Eliminating driver's license suspensions for unpaid tickets allows people to continue driving legally for work and to take care of their families while they pay off their traffic debt.

### **Drivers' Licenses and Identification Cards for Immigrants**

*Rev. Page R58 , House Article 5 sections 1-16*

Minnesota cannot fix a broken immigration system, but it can ensure the safety of our roads. Making driver's licenses available to undocumented persons promotes public safety promoting more people already on the road to be trained and insured. Further, our immigrant brothers and sisters need reforms to ensure that they are not confined to the shadows and margins of our society.

Access to driver's licenses will help immigrants meet their daily obligations. In many parts of Minnesota, there is no public transportation, and undocumented persons have no ability to get to work, church, health services, or school, other than by driving illegally. Every day, they live in fear that getting stopped could mean permanent separation from their children, spouse, or parents.

This legislation does not "reward" those who have broken the law. It looks beyond the myriad reasons why someone is here illegally with their family and seeks to protect their well-being in the reality of their situation and in light of actual prospects for immigration reform and enforcement.

We ask that, as you deliberate, please keep our reasons for supporting these two provisions in mind and include them in the final bill that you send to the Governor.

Thank you for all your hard work on behalf of Minnesotans and for your service on the Transportation Finance and Policy Conference Committee.

Sincerely,



Ryan Hamilton  
Government Affairs Associate

CC: The Honorable Erin Koegel, The Honorable Luke Frederick, The Honorable Steve Elkins, The Honorable John Petersburg, The Honorable John R. Jasinski, The Honorable Jeff R. Howe, The Honorable David J. Osmek, The Honorable Karla Bigham