

May 3, 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

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

On behalf of the 135 members of the Minnesota Asset Building Coalition, I want to thank the House and Senate Transportation Committees for hearing the Driver's License Suspension Reform bill ([SF 432/HF 336](#)). This bill was introduced by Senator Ingebrigtsen and Representative Becker-Finn and has bipartisan support in both bodies. We urge you to include the provisions from this bill in the Conference Committee Report.

Ending driver's license suspensions for unpaid traffic tickets would address a serious problem recently highlighted in both a [feature story](#) and an [editorial](#) in the Star Tribune. Over the last few decades, the state has increased fines, fees and surcharges, in part to help cover state and local government expenses, and these increases can lead to a cascade of consequences for those who are unable to pay. When someone fails to pay a traffic ticket, they suffer a double penalty: the debt is sent to collections with a late fee and a 20% surcharge, and additionally, their driver's license is suspended. National data shows that 60% of low-income people who lose their driver's license lose their job, which can quickly lead to financial crisis.

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety estimates it would issue 144,000 fewer driver's license suspensions per year if the legislature passes this bill, a 60% reduction. Law enforcement ticket about 36,000 drivers every year for driving on a suspended license, so a significant reduction in license suspensions would also enable law enforcement to focus more time on dangerous driving violations and other threats to public safety and prosecutors to spend less time prosecuting payment violations.

The Minnesota State Bar Association, the Minnesota County Attorneys Association, and the State Public Defender's Office have all endorsed this bill. In an [op-ed](#) published last year, County Attorneys from across Minnesota argued:

Suspending licenses hasn't worked as an enforcement tool...Driver's license suspensions should be reserved for the sole purpose of ensuring safe roads, not demanding payment from people who may be struggling to meet their families' basic needs.

Ending driver's license suspensions for unpaid traffic tickets is also supported by a diverse group of national organizations, including the Southern Poverty Law Center, the ACLU, the National Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ), the National Conference of State Court Administrators (CSCA), and the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). We hope this year Minnesota will follow the lead of the twelve states that have already stopped suspending driver's licenses for unpaid traffic tickets and enact this reform.

Sincerely,

Anna Odegaard, Director  
Minnesota Asset Building Coalition



## Member List

AARP Minnesota  
AEOA Head Start  
African American Leadership Forum  
African Community Senior Services  
African Development Center  
African Economic Development Solutions  
African Immigrant Services  
African Women's Alliance  
All Parks Alliance for Change  
Anoka County Community Action Program  
Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency  
Asian Economic Development Association  
Asian Media Access  
Bi-County Community Action Programs  
Black Women's Wealth Alliance  
Build Wealth MN  
CAPI USA  
Car Care Program  
Cars for Neighbors  
Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis  
Catalyst Group  
Children's Defense Fund Minnesota  
CHUM  
Churches United for the Homeless  
Citizens League  
City of Lakes Community Land Trust  
CLUES  
Coalition of Somali American Leaders  
CommonBond Communities  
Community Action Center of Northfield  
Community Action Duluth  
Community Action Partnership of Hennepin County  
Community Action Partnership of Ramsey &  
Washington Counties  
Community Action Partnership of Scott Carver &  
Dakota Counties  
Community Grassroots Solutions  
Community Table Association of Cooperatives  
Cornerstone  
Cultural Diversity Resources  
Dayton's Bluff Community Council  
EMERGE Community Development  
Exodus Lending  
Family Assets for Independence in Minnesota  
Family Means  
Financial Empowerment Collaborative  
Fond Du Lac Tribal and Community College  
Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota  
Growth & Justice  
Head Start, Three Rivers Community Action  
Hmong American Farmers Association  
Hmong American Partnership  
HOME In-stead M.O.M.S. Program  
HOME Line  
Hope Community  
Immigrant Development Center  
Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota  
Institute for a Sustainable Future  
Inter-County Community Council  
ISIAAH  
Isuroon  
Jewish Community Action  
Joint Religious Legislative Coalition  
Jordan Area Community Council  
Junior Achievement of the Upper Midwest  
Juxtaposition Arts  
KOOTASCA Community Action  
Lakes & Pines Community Action Council  
Lakes & Prairies Community Action Partnership  
Land Stewardship Project  
Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota  
Latino Economic Development Center  
Legal Services Advocacy Project  
LISC Twin Cities

Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota  
Mahube-Otwa Community Action Partnership  
Main Street Alliance  
Main Street Project  
Metropolitan Consortium of Community  
Developers  
Midwest Minnesota CDC  
MIGIZI  
Minneapolis Urban League  
Minnesota Budget Project  
Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless  
Minnesota Community Action Partnership  
Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities  
Minnesota Head Start Association  
Minnesota Housing Partnership  
Minnesota Social Service Association  
Minnesota Valley Action Council  
Mni Sota Fund  
Native American Community Development Institute  
Neighborhood Development Alliance  
Nexus Community Partners  
Northside Economic Opportunity Network  
Northside Residents Redevelopment Council  
Northwest Community Action  
Northwest Head Start  
Northwest Indian CDC  
Nucleus Clinic  
Pillsbury United Communities  
Prepare + Prosper  
PRG, Inc.  
PRISM  
Project for Pride in Living  
Reach-Up Head Start

Regional Center for Entrepreneurial Facilitation  
Rice County Habitat for Humanity  
Semcac  
Shared Capitol Cooperative  
Somali Community Resettlement Services  
Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership  
Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council  
St. Cloud NAACP  
TakeAction Minnesota  
The Family Partnership  
The Lift Garage  
The Link  
The Welcome Center  
Three Rivers Community Action  
Tri-CAP  
Tri-County Community Action Partnership  
Tri-Valley Opportunity Council  
Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity  
United Community Action Partnership  
United Way of Douglas & Pope Counties  
United Way of Freeborn County  
United Way of West Central Minnesota  
Urban Homeworks  
Valley Outreach  
Violence Free Minnesota  
Voices for Racial Justice  
West Central Minnesota Communities Action  
White Earth Investment Initiative  
Wilder Foundation  
WomenVenture  
Wright County Community Action  
Youthprise