



Community Action
Partnership of Hennepin County

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 Community Action Partnership of Hennepin County, I'm writing to thank you for hearing the **Driver's License Suspension Reform** bill in the House and Senate Transportation Finance and Policy Committees and ask that you include it in the Transportation Conference Committee Report. This provision is from a bipartisan bill authored by Senator Ingebrigtsen (Senate File 432) and Representative Becker-Finn (House File 336) and is included in the House Transportation Omnibus Budget bill.

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. According to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, this reform would reduce driver's license suspensions in Minnesota by 144,000 suspensions per year, a 60% reduction.

This reform would help low-income households in Hennepin County maintain employment, transportation to medical appointments, and keep them involved in school/community based events. When individuals lose their drivers license they also miss out on programs and services that Community Action Partnership of Hennepin County offers them to maintain their vehicle and auto insurance. If this reform were to happen then my clients would not have to worry about their drivers license being suspended due to fines they do not have the ability to pay; they would be able to legally use their vehicle for their personal and family needs.

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.

In recent years, several states have enacted reforms similar to those proposed in HF 336/SF 432. In 2017, California, Maine, and Mississippi stopped suspending driver's licenses for unpaid traffic tickets. In 2018, Virginia, Tennessee, and Michigan did the same. Adopting Driver License



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Suspension Reform would align Minnesota with best practices being established around the country.

This bill has bipartisan support in the House and the Senate and is endorsed by the Minnesota State Bar Association, the Minnesota County Attorneys Association, and the State Public Defender.

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

Sincerely,

Cassi Reissmann
Community Action Partnership of Hennepin County

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. Osmeck, The Honorable Karla Bigham