



May 4, 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 Chum, 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.

Chum (Churches United in Ministry) is comprised of 44 congregations in the Duluth area working together to provide emergency shelter, food and street outreach throughout Duluth. We support Driver's License Suspension Reform, which 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.

Fines and fees from traffic tickets and minor criminal violations strip assets from low-income communities and communities of color. Tacked on fees and surcharges drive up the cost of a basic traffic ticket to over \$100, which is a hardship for many families. A single unpaid ticket can lead to a driver's license suspension, and license suspension often causes job loss and mounting debt, which in turn often leads to eviction and homelessness.

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

CHUM is people of faith working together to provide basic necessities, foster stable lives and organize for a just and compassionate community.

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 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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rev. Patricia Benson".

Rev. Patricia Benson

Community Outreach & Advocacy Coordinator

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