

LAW, JUSTICE, AND ETHICS

Resolution LJE-20-33

A RESOLUTION ON ENDING THE UNNECESSARY LOSS OF A DRIVER'S LICENSE

WHEREAS, over seven million Americans have had their licenses suspended for unpaid, court-related debts, resulting in loss of work and other economic and social hardships, which make it more difficult to pay these fees;

WHEREAS, in Illinois, over 50 thousand licenses are suspended each year because drivers can't pay tickets, fines, or fees;

WHEREAS, excessive license suspension increases unemployment, a New Jersey study found that 42% of individuals lost their jobs following the suspension of their licenses;

WHEREAS, an Illinois survey found job loss for half of suspended drivers, disproportionately affects Black and Latino drivers are more likely than white drivers to be stopped by the police, to be fined or arrested for traffic offenses, and to suffer undue fines or incarceration;

WHEREAS, after curbing non-moving suspensions in 2012, Washington State freed up about 70,000 annual law enforcement hours to prioritize public safety;

WHEREAS, in Virginia, until new legislation was signed into law citizens had their licenses suspended for failure to pay court fees;

WHEREAS, in Washington State, an amnesty program was instituted for drivers with suspended licenses, the program saved an estimated 4,500 hours of patrol officers' time, a significant cost savings for the state;

WHEREAS, in California the state found that the police, Department of Motor Vehicles, and courts spend millions arresting, processing, administering, and adjudicating charges for driving on a suspended license, the state has ended the practice of suspending licensees for unpaid parking tickets;

WHEREAS, in Illinois a bill was introduced to help eliminate driver's license suspension as a penalty for most non-driving violations, including: failing to pay parking, compliance, or tollway tickets, fines, or fees, being judged to be a "truant minor," criminal trespass to a vehicle, and a handful of other non-driving violations, allows an individual whose license was suspended under any of these provisions to have their license reinstated; and

WHEREAS, driver's licenses should be suspended for highway safety reasons only, not for debt collection or other non-moving violations.

LAW, JUSTICE, AND ETHICS

Resolution LJE-20-33

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) supports legislation that would direct the Department of Motor Vehicles in all states to adopt and update rules relative to non-moving violations that would remove language providing that all notices sent to a person involved in an administrative proceeding shall state that failure to satisfy any fine or penalty shall result in the suspension of their driving privileges, vehicle registration, or both;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL supports legislation that would direct the Department of Motor Vehicles in our respective states to adopt and update rules to ensure that failure to pay any fine or penalty will result in the suspension of their;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a person whose driver's license was canceled, suspended, or revoked under circumstances such as those discussed above shall have their driving privileges reinstated; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States; the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate; and other federal and state government officials as appropriate.

SPONSOR: Representative Carol Ammons (IL)

Committee of Jurisdiction: Law, Justice, and Ethics Policy Committee

Certified by Committee Co-Chair: Representative Reginald Meeks (KY)

Ratified in Plenary Session: Ratification Date is December 6, 2019

Ratification is certified by: Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter (SC), President