

Good afternoon,

I came here today, from Haysville, Kansas to share my experiences of trying to overcome poverty and unemployment while living without a driver's license.

I spent seven years with a revoked license, which I have to say, was justified under the circumstances. I have had my license back for several years, and I speak today on behalf of those who currently cannot obtain their licenses, due solely to monetary issues, rather than my own specific circumstances.

We are placing impoverished Kansans in a catch-22. Generally speaking, people who are financially stable can pay tickets, afford to maintain insurance without lapse and can afford to make minor repairs and keep their tags current.

Our poorest families are the ones who are affected by these citations, which, when unpaid, can result in the suspension of driving privileges. Once an economically challenged person loses their license, their financial problems go into a downward spiral.

Many of our states' low-income families live in areas where job opportunity is scarce. By nature, these people have to travel farther to find work. Many live in areas where public transportation is either inadequate or non-existent.

Having children compounds these problems. Aside from just getting to work, the kids have to get to school and daycare. Parents have to grocery shop, which is no easy feat without the use of a car. Many families have to use Laundromats to wash their clothes.

If a person is unable to maintain a drivers' license due to a lack of money, suspending such a person's driving privileges merely acts to worsen the situation.

Allowing people in these situations to continue driving when they pose no danger to public safety is a smart move that will increase disenfranchised citizens' ability to pay their fines, seek employment and care for their families, avoiding such problems in the future.

(Michael Shatz)

House Transportation
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