



KANSAS BLACK LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

To: Members of the Senate Transportation Committee
From: Bonita Gooch, president
For the Kansas Black Leadership Council
Date: 01/18/17
Re: Testimony in support of Senate Bill No. 5

Dear Chairman Peterson,

The Kansas Black Leadership Council submits this written testimony in support of Senate Bill No.5 that makes a small but important change to K.S.A. 2016 Sup. 8-2110 by allowing individuals whose license have been suspended to apply for and receive restricted driving privileges on more than one occasion.

Sure, you would think individuals would have learned their lesson, but for some of us, it takes more than once to get it right.

Based on the hardship and limitations of a restrictive license written in the law, it's hard for us to believe few, if any, individuals would fail to pay their fines "just because." Most likely, there are other circumstances behind their failure to pay. What most often limits an individual's ability to pay their fine is simple economics.

KBLC supports this bill because of the disproportionate number of tickets written to African Americans in Kansas. This fact is supported by a statewide study, and in Wichita by more than one independent "Stop" Study. It's easy to say these individuals were doing something wrong, but who amongst us hasn't speedy EVER. But when they're targeted, as supported by these studies, African Americans receive their unfair share of tickets.

The tickets, often written in poorer inner city neighborhoods, put an undo strain on already stretched to the limit household budgets. Paying a ticket -- with costs often for more than \$100 -- on a strained family budget can often mean the difference between eating and not eating.

Not allowing these individuals to apply for another restricted license isn't the answer, especially in cities where public transportation isn't readily available or non-existent. Giving these individuals the ability to drive to work, earn a living, and pay for insurance makes the best sense for them, their families, their community, and all Kansans.

What are the alternatives to being able to drive to a job using a restricted license? These individuals may end up on public assistance, find illegal ways to support themselves, or drive illegally and uninsured. KBLC would much rather see them back on the road allowed to drive to work and support themselves and their family.

If the law works for the first time a person's driver's license is suspended, let the process work again. It's the best answer for all.