

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 87  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
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Kansas Legal Services has continually encouraged removal for barriers to people who seek reinstatement of their driver's license.

Our reasons for this support are grounded in efforts to get people out of poverty and improve the community.

For most Kansans, access to employment requires access to a driver's license. Bus routes are only available in large cities. Even where a bus is available, it often doesn't go to the edge of the city where low-skill employment opportunities exist. It also doesn't operate at night, when new employees might be put on 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> shift jobs.

For those struggling with substance abuse or mental health issues, access to treatment requires transportation or access to a driver's license.

For those required to meet court ordered sanction programs, access to these programs requires access to a driver's license.

Over the years, this Legislature has passed some very helpful legislation for people who have lost their driver's license. They can apply for a restricted license, allowing them to drive for one year to these important resources for a complete return to society. This allows them time to pay fines and fees and get a full, unrestricted license again.

However, one group of people cannot access that program. Anyone who has a charge of driving while restricted is still prevented from using that program. This bill could be amended to help resolve that issue. The bill, as written, prevents local officials from including people in their amnesty program who have a license suspended under KSA 8-262. I believe that local discretion should be given to this option. If the Court and the Prosecutor want to include these people in their program, they should have the ability to do so.

This bill comes from the real life experience of someone in the Court system. It creates a statutory framework for the Court and the county attorney to establish a program that would create locally appropriate options for getting people a driver's license and getting them back to work.

I have been told that many of these options are available in municipal courts, if the Judge is willing to create a program to allow this. However, this bill should be expanded to include municipal courts, where they don't have this power. Specifically, the ability to waive reinstatement fees should be extended to municipal courts.

Kansas Legal Services, Inc. is a private, non profit 501 (c)(3) corporation that provides civil legal and alternative dispute resolution services to low income persons in Kansas through our eleven field offices. We are the Legal Services Corporation grantee in Kansas. The primary mission of Kansas Legal Services (KLS) is to provide equal access to justice for persons not able to pay for legal services. KLS provided advice, representation, online support for self-represented people and mediation services to over 20,000 low income Kansans during 2018. Services are provided in all 105 Kansas counties for a wide range of legal and dispute resolution matters.

KLS has progressively focused its advocacy efforts on special needs groups such as victims of violence, children, the elderly, and individuals with disability conditions. Additionally, with funding from the Access to Justice Grant, the Kansas Human Rights Commission, and other private and public sources, KLS offers mediation services.