

PROPONENT TESTIMONY - HB2629

02/17/2022

Good afternoon Chairman Proehl, Vice-Chairman Delperdang, Ranking Minority Member Helgerson and members of the House Transportation Committee:

My name is Bobby Lyghtle Jr. and I come in support of HB2629 and the proposal to reduce the minimum jail punishment penalty for driving on suspended. People like me are trying to get to work and take care of their families and their homes but get caught in a punitive cycle that is nearly impossible to escape and ultimately makes things worse. All of my choices, all of my options are incredibly difficult.

As a supporter of HB2629, I believe that removing the mandatory jail-time punishment will allow me and similarly situated individuals, the chance to keep my job and my license and my ability to be a good citizen.

In the last two years, I have already paid close to \$15,000 in legal fees, fines, and reinstatement fees to get my drivers license reinstated. To get where I am at today, I've had to work two jobs and I've made a diligent effort to come into compliance. Unfortunately, I'm still dealing with old "driving while suspended" charge going back several years and may have to quit my jobs if/when the next mandatory jail sentence is handed down. To punish me with jail-time and suspend my license again for another 90 days (as punishment) not only undermines the hope that came with my efforts but substantially harms my ability to provide for myself my family and my home.

I urge you to remove the mandatory jail-time punishment for driving while suspended. Most of the suspensions stem from unpaid tickets or child support issues. A suspension with threats of jail time as punishment doesn't really help anybody become better or independent but it can certainly cause more poverty if people cannot safely and legally get to work.

It took me years to get my drivers license reinstated but now I'm dealing with misdemeanor suspension charges going back to 2014. It appears I'm going to have to spend up to (another) 6 months in jail. I know that if I get this type of sentence, I will lose my job and become more dependent on government. How does this make sense?

I urge you to pass HB2629

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