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OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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Bipartisan Legislation to End License Suspensions due to Fines and Fees Passes Oregon House

Suspensions disproportionately impact low-income communities and communities of color

SALEM, Ore. – The Oregon House of Representatives passed bipartisan legislation today, [House Bill 4065](#), to end the practice of suspending driver licenses for failure to pay court fines and fees.

Rep. Chris Gorsek (D-Troutdale) has been a longtime champion of the legislation. On the floor, he said the practice is devastating to people's lives.

“Suspending a license deprives people of reliable, lawful transportation necessary to get to and from work, or to their critical obligations,” Rep. Gorsek said. “A system that relies on debt-based driver license suspensions creates a vicious cycle of increasing debt and wastes state resources. Public safety should not be tied to debt collection, and this bill is an important move to create a public safety system where everyone can thrive.”

[According to the Oregon Law Center](#), more than 334,000 license suspensions have been issued in the last decade. These suspensions, which impact individuals who are unable to pay fines and fees, perpetuates cycles of debt and poverty, and deprives individuals of the ability to get to work, school or the doctor. Further, according to data [recently released by the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission](#), Black and Latinx people are disproportionately stopped, ticketed, charged and convicted. As a result, fine and fee-based license suspensions disproportionately impact communities of color, in addition to low-income Oregonians.

“Suspending licenses when someone can't pay isn't effective,” said Rep. Carla Piluso (D-Gresham), a chief sponsor of the legislation and former Gresham Police Chief. “Taking a driver's license away from an Oregonian for not paying a fine or fee does not make our roads safer. Without a license, people face impossible choices. Data shows that debt-based suspensions are not linked to positive public safety outcomes. Oregon already has a mechanism in place to suspend driver licenses when people have too many violations. It is important to end use of a policy that negatively impacts people simply because they don't have money.”

Oregon House Democrats are working to build a fairer criminal justice system that will keep our neighborhoods safer and protect underrepresented communities.

In addition to Rep. Gorsek and Rep. Piluso, Rep. Jeff Barker (D-Aloha), Rep. Janelle Bynum (D-Happy Valley), Rep. Ron Noble (R-McMinnville) and Sen. James Manning Jr. (D-Eugene) are chief sponsors. Sponsors of the legislation include Rep. Christine Drazan (R-Canby), Rep. Julie Fahey (D-West Eugene and Junction City), Rep. Ken Helm (D-Beaverton), Rep. Alissa Keny-Guyer (D-Portland), Rep. Akasha Lawrence Spence (D-Portland), Rep. Pam Marsh (D-Ashland), Rep. Susan McLain (D-Forest Grove), Rep. Mark Meek (D-Oregon City), Rep. Tiffany Mitchell (D-Astoria), Rep. Nancy Nathanson (D-Eugene), Rep. Rob Nosse (D-Portland), Rep. Karin Power (D-Milwaukie), Rep. Rachel Prusak (D-West Linn), Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-Lake Oswego), Rep. Tawna Sanchez (D-Portland), Rep. Duane Stark (R-Grants Pass), Rep. Anna Williams (D-Hood River), Sen. Michael Dembrow (D-Portland), Sen. Lew Frederick (D-Portland), Sen. Sara Gelser (D-Corvallis), Sen. Tim Knopp (R-Bend), Sen. Dennis Linthicum (R-Klamath Falls), Sen. Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham), Sen. Floyd Prozanski (D-Eugene), Sen. Arnie Roblan (D-Coos Bay), Sen. Kim Thatcher (R-Keizer) and Sen. Rob Wagner (D-Lake Oswego).

The bill, which passed 42 to 16, now heads to the Senate for consideration.

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