COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUDICIARY & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEES

THE TRADE INSTITUTE OF PITTSBURGH
7800 SUSQUEHANNA STREET
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2017
10:00 A.M.

PRESENTATION ON
DRIVER LICENSE SUSPENSIONS FOR
NON-DRIVING OFFENSES

BEFORE:
HONORABLE BARRY J. JOZWIAK, CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE DOM COSTA
HONORABLE JOSEPH PETRARCA
HONORABLE RONALD MARSICO
HONORABLE WILLIAM KELLER, MINORITY CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE MARIA P. DONATUCCI
HONORABLE WILLIAM C. KORTZ, II
HONORABLE RICK SACCONE
HONORABLE JOHN TAYLOR, MAJORITY CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE JAKE WHEATLEY
HONORABLE DAN MILLER
HONORABLE ED GAINЕY
COMMITTEE STAFF PRESENT:
ERIC C. BUGAILE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

GREG MORELAND
RESEARCH ANALYST
MAJORITY HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

MEREDITH BIGGICA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MINORITY HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
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(Opening Remarks and Introduction)

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: We're going to do two things. We're going to let our court reporter get completely set up. We're going to make a little shift. We're going to put this table facing the audience so everybody can hear our testifiers.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: We have the License Control Division Manager.

MR. ARROYO: Good morning. My name is Diosdado Arroyo. I'm the License Control Division Manager for the Bureau of Driver Licensing at the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. On behalf of Secretary Richards, thank you for the opportunity to discuss these pieces of proposed legislation, all of which are centered on the suspension of driver's licenses.

As you know, driving is a privilege, not a right. An individual earns a driver's license based on the individual's demonstrated knowledge and skills, and once it is received, the individual is responsible for obeying traffic laws and to make safe driving choices.

Clearly, there are well-defined consequences, which may include suspension or even revocation of driving privileges. The suspension
of driving privileges has been used for decades to
address poor driving behavior, and there is
research that it can be effective in reducing
traffic crashes.

However, suspensions are now used as a
mechanism to gain compliance with non-highway
safety or social nonconformance violations as
well. In general, PennDoT takes the position that
driving privilege suspensions should be imposed
only as a consequence for traffic violations and
actions that threaten traffic safety traffic, like
refusing chemical testing after a DUI arrest.

This is consistent with PennDoT's support
of House Bill 42, which eliminate driver's license
suspensions for non-highway safety violations.
Research has shown that driver's license
suspensions for non-highway safety reasons are
ineffective and dilute the effectiveness of
suspensions for highway safety convictions.

During the calendar year 2016 alone,
PennDoT received over 14,000 violations for
non-highway safety infractions, which are
processable both electronically and manually.
However, we estimate that nearly 7400 of these
violations had to be processed manually due to
inaccurate or incomplete defendant information.

This time-consuming process puts a strain on the Department's resources. If enacted, House Bill 42 would have some costs to update systems and processes. In addition, there would some lost restoration fees. With that said, for a 2013 study by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, or AAMVA, that resulted in the Best Practices Guide for Reducing Suspended Drivers, there are significant benefits to eliminating nondriver suspensions not only for PennDoT, but also for the courts and law enforcement.

Also, there is a significant impact, especially to younger drivers who receive nondriving violation suspensions. These suspensions can effectively prevent them from having the opportunity to reverse their life in a positive way. While driving is a privilege, it is a key part in ensuring employment.

For your convenience, I brought copies of the study, and those have been handed out to the Committee.

In addition, the Committee also asked about the Department's comments related to House
Bill 163, which would eliminate driver's license suspensions for a drug conviction and for a conviction or adjudication of delinquency for terroristic threats committed on any school property for any person aged 21 or younger.

As I had mentioned earlier, based on research that showed the ineffectiveness of driver's license suspensions for nontraffic violations, PennDoT supports this legislation conditioned upon the adoption of House Resolution 76.

Federal law requires driver's license suspensions for all convictions of drug offenses, and PennDoT must submit an annual certification to the Federal Highway Administration, or FHWA, to be considered compliant with this law. When a state fails to comply, FHWA is authorized to withdraw federal funding from the state, either 8 or 10 percent of the funds appropriated to that state under the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century.

However, if the state opposes the imposition of driver's license suspensions for drug convictions, there is another option. States may comply with this law by annually submitting a
certification to FHWA stating they are opposed to
the enactment or enforcement of a state law that
requires a license suspension or revocation based
on a drug conviction as well as certification that
both Houses of the Legislature have adopted a
resolution expressing their opposition to these
suspensions.

House Resolution 76 would serve that
purpose for Pennsylvania and would need to be
adopted concurrently with House Bill 163 so as to
not jeopardize Pennsylvania's share of federal
highway funding.

For perspective, in 2016, PennDoT
received and processed approximately 27,000 drug
conviction violations. As with House Bill 42,
there would be some cost to implement House Bill
163 to update systems and processes if this
legislation were enacted. In addition, there
would be some lost restoration fees. But as noted
earlier, PennDoT believes based on the study done
by AAMVA that the benefits to PennDoT, law
enforcement, the courts and individuals themselves
far outweigh those fiscal impacts.

Lastly, I'll discuss HB 1777, which would
establish a 12-month amnesty program by the courts
in cooperation with PennDoT.

The bill would allow qualified
individuals to reinstate their suspended driving
privileges and remove points from their records.
The amnesty would be available only where the
licensee had failed to pay or has become
delinquent in paying the fines, fees and penalties
owed to the court for certain traffic violations.

PennDoT is neutral on this legislation.

It should be noted, however, as currently written,
a convicted driver who receives a suspension and
becomes delinquent in paying the associated fine
may be granted amnesty under the bill upon payment
of the fine. The amnesty would excuse that driver
from serving the remainder of the suspension.

In contrast, a convicted driver who
receives a suspension and promptly pays in full
the associated fine would have to serve the full
suspension. This discrepancy raises equal
protection issues.

The driver granted amnesty and the driver
who promptly pays the fine are treated differently
even though both have paid the fine. As with
previous legislation, changes to PennDoT's
driver's licensing process would be necessary.
In closing, I would note that the AAMVA 2013 Best Practices Guide for reducing suspended drivers states that the cost of arresting, processing, administering and enforcing social nonconformance-related driver's license suspensions create a significant strain on budgets and other resources and detract from highway and public safety priorities. The elimination of driver's license suspensions for reasons other than traffic safety violations would provide relief from the ongoing strain on resources.

Moreover, allowing individuals who have not committed a traffic violation to retain their driving privileges will help obtain and maintain employment which has been shown to decrease the chance of recidivism.

Thank you again for this opportunity to support this legislation. I will be more than happy to take questions from the Committee at this point.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: Thank you, sir. The first question will be going to the discrepancy you described in Representative Wheatley's bill and ask if you think you should go that next step for those people who did pay their fines and then
had excess suspension.

    How would you suggest given this thought about how to rectify that equal protection argument?

    MR. ARROYO: That would be an option that would essentially not penalize or, for lack of a better word, not have the playing field fair for the individual who has paid their fine in full immediately and they would still have to serve their suspension.

    CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: We have to consider that. I'm sorry for jumping around.

    I'll give you a chance to respond to Mr. Arroyo's comments.

    REPRESENTATIVE WHEATLEY: I can appreciate PennDoT's position, but it's similar to what we've done with tax amnesty. There's the same argument. You have taxpayers who paid their taxes on time and fairly. But we just recently twice have allowed for an amnesty period for people who have not paid their taxes to allow for them to catch up.

    It's the same kind of dilemma with the same types of, I think, benefit for the Commonwealth, because there are some people when
you give the extra incentives, especially those who have had a history of years and years of additional penalties that are attached on them, that they are not going to ever come into our system in a legal way, but they're still endangering because they're going to still drive.

So I think that's something that the general assembly should consider. It's the exact same principle as the tax amnesty.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: I think that's a great point because the difference with your tax amnesty example is that someone will be allowed to drive and someone will not who paid the same price.

Representative Miller.

REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: Thank you. On that question -- and I apologize. I can't recall every aspect of Representative Wheatley's bill. Somebody goes in, gets found guilty, and gets the called-for license suspension for whatever, pays the fine and still has to do the 12 months. Somebody loses their license for 12 months. They cannot drive.

My point is, wouldn't they still have the 12 months? Wouldn't they have just lost the same amount of time anyhow? If you paid the fine on
the first day of your suspension, the last day of
suspension, that doesn't matter; right?

MR. ARROYO: Well, that would fall on the
courts. Someone convicted of -- say fleeing and
eluding would give someone a 12-month suspension.
So the individual that's convicted of fleeing and
eluding would receive a one-year suspension,
follow-on suspension. And say they paid their
fine in full.

You have another individual who's
convicted of the very same violation and receives
a 12-month suspension, but, say, they're not able
to pay the full fine up front. They set up a
payment arrangement. That individual then goes
into default. So this amnesty bill would allow
that individual to pay a reduced penalty or fee
and then have their suspension term immediately
rescinded, have their driving privileges
immediately reinstated.

REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: I thought it was
the original penalty. It's not the big baby
original penalty, the first original penalty?

MR. ARROYO: The fine associated with
fleeing and eluding.

REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: Let's say it's a
thousand bucks. I have no idea. I thought the bill -- correct me, Jake or anybody, if I got it wrong -- I thought the bill was saying -- say, you ended up getting three separate suspensions because you owed a thousand bucks for fleeing and eluding. I thought what it said is that it wipes out everything additional that came up and you pay what you were originally were supposed to pay.

REPRESENTATIVE WHEATLEY: From my understanding, if your original penalty required a 12-month suspension as well, you would still serve that, but most people would already be able to prove that they've served that suspension.

So it's not that they would not have to do whatever the fine -- whatever the original fine and penalty was, they would have had to have met those obligations before they could legally come back to PennDoT and say I've done it.

So if there was a 12-month suspension associated with it, they would have to serve that 12-month suspension on top of paying the fine before they were able to actually to apply.

Now, what this bill is saying though is if your original suspension is less than 11 points, then you can pay that fine without those
additional -- this is my understanding -- without those additional associated things that you might have gotten. So if you've been driving five years and got additional suspensions after those, those are the things that are wiped off that clears you for going back to get your license.

REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: I'm looking at at 1593, Program Requirements on the bill, it looks like section (b), and I see a hundred percent of the original fine language. Perhaps it's something that you can help me out later in understanding.

My whole point is when you're talking about an equal protection type of argument, what I see is the elimination of late fines. Maybe that would be something to talk about. My point is whether you pay your fine on the first day of your suspension or the last day of your suspension, as far as I recall, that made no difference.

His bill would just say you're paying the original fine still in its full, just absent late fees that may come up for any subsequent offenses. So I'm not entirely sure the equal protection argument is there.

Let me ask my hopefully second question.
You mentioned mine and Rick's issues with 76 and so forth. The one difference that I come about -- I wondering if you can give any thought about it -- is that I still have some concern. There are some states like I mentioned, Ohio for example and Indiana is another one, where they instead of doing a blanket -- there's no doubt Rick's idea is simple and easier to do. Those states don't eliminate all suspensions for drug possession.

Instead, what they do, both of those states as an example, they give discretion to the judge to tailor that, to use it as kind of a carrot baiting stick, to go a long probation, say, once I'm confident that you're not in line with A, B and C, whether it be two months -- a kid maybe went partying and for some reason was holding a bag even though they've never used before versus somebody who uses 15 bags of heroin a Saturday night. So they tailor it between those two.

I'm wondering if that possible tailoring is something you could speak to, not so much whether you approve one way or another, but do you have the capability of monitoring that?

MR. ARROYO: From the business side, the IT side, I'm not sure if PennDoT would be able to
monitor. I see that as the courts being the entity that's responsible for monitoring, making these decisions.

Today currently, PennDoT is just a receiver of the information once the disposition has been rendered. We don't necessarily monitor any type of compliance.

REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: Here's my point. When an officer, let's say, pulled over somebody for whatever reason and wants to check to see if the license is suspended and the judge, in my example going off of Ohio, goes the discretion route and says you know what, you've given me two screens showing you're in treatment, so forth, I'm giving your license back, where you have your license like in OLL to just go to work or to see your kid or something else like that.

How can that work? How can that flexibility be given to a judge in a way that the officer would be able to verify the status of a license? Because I'm sure they're not necessarily following the judge.

MR. ARROYO: Is your example using the preface the individual's driving privileges is suspended or the individual was convicted in that
REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: In this example, say he's convicted, suspended for a period of time, showed compliance for a month and the judge said, I'm relieving you of the suspension as long as you continue to show compliance on your treatment program.

So instead of the mandatory six that they might have gotten on a possession charge, the judge said, you're showing me progress. I'm letting you go with one. My belief is the police in checking a license would be checking PennDoT information.

MR. ARROYO: They would. If the court makes a decision to rescind or restore that individual with driving privileges, the court would have to submit that information to us. And if there's some type of law enacted that would authorize that, then we would restore that individual's driving privileges. So if they are pulled over and law enforcement checks the record, they will no longer be under suspension.

REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: So it sounds like something that can be done. Correct?

MR. ARROYO: Yes. There would be an
option as well for an occupational limited license. Currently, an individual convicted of a drug violation is ineligible for an occupational limited license.

REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: Representative Donatucci.

REPRESENTATIVE DONATUCCI: Thank you for your testimony.

MR. ARROYO: You're welcome.

REPRESENTATIVE DONATUCCI: Earlier in your testimony, you mentioned that in 2016, there were 14,000 nondriving violations. Can you tell me the total amount of licenses currently suspended for nondriving?

MR. ARROYO: For nondriving violations, I wouldn't know that offhand. I could provide that information to you.

REPRESENTATIVE DONATUCCI: Are there any fines or fees associated with nondriving suspensions?

MR. ARROYO: They are.

REPRESENTATIVE DONATUCCI: Is there a high cost to PennDoT of the processing of
nondriving-related suspensions?

MR. ARROYO: It's an added cost. The cost is basically absorbed in our daily operations for processing the traffic violations as well. It's just that they're an everyday operation. But there is an added cost. If they would be eliminated, there would be a cost savings.

REPRESENTATIVE DONATUCCI: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: Representative Don Costa.

REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Basically, it was my understanding or is my understanding these bills and resolutions are for nontraffic offenses. You were stating fleeing and eluding. I can tell you Representative Jozwiak and I as former law enforcement, we're going to oppose it. I'm sure the law enforcement community will oppose it.

MR. ARROYO: HB 1777 does include traffic violations. It just excludes certain what you can consider major violations, such as DUI, leaving the scene of an accident or homicide by vehicle. There's only a specific set of ineligible violations. Other than that, HB 1777 will cover
traffic violations.

REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: So we're saying if someone has accumulated 11 points or 10 points, we're going to wipe that clean for speeding? Let's face it, if you get 10 points, you're a habitual offender.

MR. ARROYO: The representative can speak to that. It's where the bill -- if the violation that placed you under suspension -- correct me if I'm wrong -- puts you over the point accumulation that requires suspension, which is reaching 11 points or more, if amnesty is granted, then we would remove those points and restore that individual's operating privileges.

REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: I don't know. Maybe you can speak to it, Jake. Fleeing and eluding, that's one that I know that we could not support in law enforcement because it causes deaths. It causes accidents. It causes crashes. That's a major violation.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIACK: Representative Wheatley can respond.

REPRESENTATIVE WHEATLEY: I will say this: We're very much open to any suggestions in working with this and to process it.
It is my understanding that, again, it's only if the original offense -- so, again, we were trying to take people back to their original offenses. If the original offense puts you over the point system at 11 points, then even when you pay your fine, you will still have to wait the time limit to get you under the 11 before you could get your restoration letter to go to PennDoT. You still have to do that.

So that wouldn't take away from law enforcement's concerns, because the driver would still have to pay their penance for their original fine.

REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Thank you, Jake.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: Representative Kortz.

REPRESENTATIVE KORTZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Arroyo, thank you for your testimony.

MR. ARROYO: You're welcome.

REPRESENTATIVE KORTZ: The amnesty program in 1976, can you tell me, was it a blanket amnesty program for everything, or was it only supposed to be for -- can you get that information?

MR. ARROYO: I can get that information.
That's a little before my time.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: Representative Gainey.

REPRESENTATIVE GAINEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My question involves nondriving issues, when a vehicle is not driven. How many are related to child support?

MR. ARROYO: I don't have that number. I can provide you with a number on driver suspensions that have occurred in a specific timeframe.

REPRESENTATIVE GAINEY: I appreciate that. Can I get an idea if you go back from 2010 all the way up, for example, five years, or just five years of how many licenses have been suspended for failure to pay child support. I'm curious because I haven't seen that part, but I've seen it keep people out of work.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: Are there any other questions? Thank you.

MR. ARROYO: You're welcome.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: I'm sure you will be involved in this process. Thank you.

Can we assemble our next panel talking about amnesty legislation. The sisterly group
will testify about House Bill 1777.

Gentlemen, just for the benefit of court stenographer, prior to you speaking, just identify yourself and your organization.

Sir, we'll begin with you.

MR. ALBRECHT: Good morning. My name is Justin Albrecht from the APRI Institute. I'm very honored to be able to include my story in those heard today concerning the challenges that the driver's license law creates for people trying to turn their life around. The story of me losing my license goes back to 1998.

I was charged with a drug-related offense. I was sent a letter from the DMV when I was sentenced telling me that my license was suspended, but I was not told that I needed to send in the notification to acknowledge the suspension of my license. I just figured that my suspension would start when I was released from prison.

I completed my sentence and was living responsibly abiding by the law. I looked into getting my license so that I could work. I found out my suspension hadn't started running down yet. I sent in $25 and found out that I had to wait two
years to apply for my driving privileges. I had a
two-year suspension.

Many years after I first started working
to get my license and following the law, I was
arrested again on another drug charge. This
arrest extended my suspension for another three
years. I've never been arrested for any traffic
moving violations, but due to drug charges, I
could not get back on my feet by getting a good
job without a driver's license. I made an honest
attempt to obtain a driver's license so that I get
a good paying job. But the current laws about my
past mistakes would restrict my future
opportunities.

I was denied benefit-paying permanent
jobs because I had no license. I couldn't work
for Mr. Rooter because they required me to have a
license. I was rejected for employment by the
county Parks and Recreation Department when I told
them I had a suspended driver's license. A family
member of mine told me about a high paying job
with the boilermakers union, but they couldn't
accept me without a driver's license.

These are all jobs that can pay rent,
utilities, groceries, tuitions and a car, the pay
for jobs that require a driver's license to help a person save for a house, provide well for their kids and the future generation. I would like to have a chance to make the kind of salary that can allow me to get ahead and achieve my dreams.

The current driver's license laws are preventing me from doing that. I hope that the PA lawmakers will offer occupational licenses to ex-offenders who have found jobs without the difficult application process that denies so many people of their bread and butter license.

Men and women transitioning out of prison who are fortunate enough to find a good job need to be able to get to work. After serving their time, a driver's license should not keep them from getting a legitimate legal job. A payment plan could work as well to help people pay off their fines, fees and costs. No one has thousands of dollars to pay off a lump sum fine all at once when they have the cost of living to deal with every day.

I want to thank everyone for listening to me, and I hope those who have paid their debt to society can move on with their lives and earn a decent living because they have driving privileges.
to get to work or driving for work duties if necessary. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: Thank you.

Mr. Walton. Are you also with APRI?

MR. WALTON: Yes, sir. I'm the program director.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: You might have this already incorporated in your testimony, but can you give us a few sentences about that organization as well.

MR. WALTON: The A. Philip Randolph Institute, its mission is to identify, recruit and train individuals from underserved, under-represented and previously incarcerated communities to build the kind of skills necessary to have family-sustained careers.

Our goal is to simply transform communities, raise per capita income, increase home ownership and, as a result, improve public safety. All of these things are so inter-related into what goes on every day in urban America and across this country.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: Is that a Pittsburgh-based organization?

MR. WALTON: It is a national
organization. We have a chapter here in Pittsburgh. It is one of 132 chapters across the United States.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: So this is DeWitt Walton from the Philip Randolph Institute.

MR. WALTON: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: Thank you very much.

MR. WALTON: I'm really blessed to be here this afternoon, this morning, to have an opportunity to share with you how critical it is that the transportation committee moves legislation forward that really gives people an opportunity to rebuild their lives.

Far too often in our communities, people who have made mistakes don't have a legitimate opportunity to engage in transforming behavior. Driver's licenses are so critical to their family success and their personal success. The jobs today and the jobs of tomorrow more often than not won't be on the bus line. So people have to be able to get there.

Driver's licenses are critical for folks to get there. That is the first hurdle. Many careers in the building and construction trades will not accept an individual without a driver's
license. We have partnerships with a host of companies today that if we had the barrier of driver's licenses removed, I could put 200 people to work today. We can't find enough people that meet employer specifications to go to work.

To be able to earn, to start and earn 35,000 and $40,000 a year truly transforms people's lives. It gives them real choices that they're able to make. It takes them off the poverty list and many times not even being held up by the safety net and turns them into taxpayers. And the state will benefit from those additional revenues.

We need your help, your leadership to resolve that issue. Your committee has the wherewithal and the ability to make that change. We're asking that you continue to move forward with this legislation from all the various resolutions and pieces of the legislation that have been submitted by Representative Wheatley, Representative Saccone and Representative Miller, meld that into a document that really gives people an opportunity to rebuild their lives.

That's it, sir. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: Thank you very much.
Steve, please identify yourself and your organization for our stenographer.

MR. SHELTON: Good morning, everyone. I'm Steve Shelton, and I'm the founder and executor director of the Trade Institute of Pittsburgh. Very simply said, here at the Trade Institute we put tools in people's hands and get them jobs in the building trades. We're able to take a student from a jail cell or off the street to a $15 an hour job in ten weeks.

This year alone, we have 94 percent job placement rate with contractors throughout our region. Our recidivism rate inside of a year is 4 percent versus Pennsylvania's 22.5 percent. Most of our students have had challenging pasts, whether it was that they did jail time or just lack of opportunities. We found that they just needed a hand up navigating the avenues to get into a construction career.

Now, I believe God created everybody to do something. If you've never had the opportunity to do what it is He created you to do, you're going to find something to do, even if it's wrong. That's what many of the students here have done. Now they've paid their debt in jail. Let's help
them put their lives back together so they can
prosper.

Having worked 44 years in the building
trades, I know the value of having a career. I
worked as a laborer, a bricklayer, stone mason,
electrician, plumber, HVAC mechanic. In the early
'80s I was an aviation electrician in the United
States Navy. The reason for me starting the Trade
Institute was simply wanting to train others in
what I was trained in doing.

Another reason is ask any contractor you
meet what's the biggest challenge they have now or
see coming in the near future? And I promise you
one of the answers will be a lack of talented
craftsmen or women to fill the positions they
have, to complete the work they have on time and
on budget.

The talent on the other side of this wall
is undeniable. If you get a minute today, walk
through the space and take a look at some of the
work these went and women are doing. It never
cesses to amaze me the amount of talented people
we have locked up.

Here at TIP we do all we can to help
people prosper. We're here today to ask for some
help to make our job and our students' lives much
easier. That said, I want to thank everybody for
being here today, for taking time to address this
major issue in workforce development, the driver's
license.

We here at the Trade Institute can get
individuals $15 an hour jobs all day long on a bus
line. But with a driver's license in their
pocket, the career possibilities expand
tremendously. For instance, we have a $5 billion
fracking project just south of here that I can't
get industry certified welding graduates to
because of past offenses that keep them from
obtaining a driver's license.

As I sit here today, I see an incredible
amount of influence in this room. I ask today of
that influence to make this positive change so
desperately needed by some great people looking to
put their lives back on track. The number one key
to people successfully reentering society from
prison is a job.

There's one thing, and that's for sure.
The future is coming whether we're ready for it or
not. I ask here today that we change the driver's
license legislation so we can all go into the
future ready and prospering and letting those who
want to rebuild their lives be all they can aspire
to be.

Thank you so much for being here.

MR. NOBERS: My name is Jeff Nobers. I'm
the executive director of the Builders Guild of
Western Pennsylvania. We are a labor management
organization. Our members consist of 16
commercial construction trade unions operating in
Western Pennsylvania, a little bit into Ohio and
West Virginia as well, as well as the general and
specialty contractors that hire the members for
construction projects.

I'm not going to repeat much of what's
been said because we face the same issues and
believe the same things. What I can tell you is
this: On a daily basis, the biggest issue we face
is recruiting people into the construction trades.
One of the big barriers we do face is the lack of
a driver's license.

We require a driver's license. It's not
a negotiable situation. By nature of the
profession, you have to be able to drive and get
to where you need to be.

Our training centers are spread out
throughout southwestern Pennsylvania, so they're not readily accessible by public transportation. Steve mentioned the fracking plant. That's a 45 minute to an hour drive from here. There's no public transportation to get you there.

When you look at our entire region, the growth that is taking place now, that is forecast to take place and will continue to, a lot of the construction is not going to be within the environment of the City of Pittsburgh or Allegheny County where you can avail yourself of public transportation.

This year alone, there will be nearly $4.7 billion in commercial construction completed in this ten-county region. Next year the forecast is in excess of 5 billion, and it continues to go up, a little tougher to forecast in commercial two, three, four years out.

But our viewpoint is that we are in a building boom now that is not going to end any time soon. The realities we face, we have 41,000 members today. Every one of our unions is operating, for all intents and purposes, today at 100 maximum manpower. We're scrambling to keep people moving from job to job.
We are actively and heavily recruiting on a daily basis. And I'll tell you one of the most frustrating things to come upon is doing community job fairs, doing events for DeWitt where you meet a lot of people that are good people. Did they make a bad decision at some point in their life? Yes, they did, and they readily admit that.

I've been with the recruiters from my unions who have said this guy will be a great operating engineer, but he won't have a license for three years. So there's no way we can help this person.

The biggest impediment to growth in this region is going to be the skilled workforce. If you look at the shift of the job market, we're going to be in a situation in the next few years where roughly 60 percent of the available jobs, careers require technical skills. They don't require college, but they do require a two-year associate's degree, technical school training and apprenticeship program.

In any of these cases, a driver's license is going to be critical because all of these jobs are not centrally located. The other factor is people on reentry, I meet guys that come out of
prison. They'll say to me, "I have a felony. I have a criminal background. Would I have any shot in the union trades?" My question to them is, "Do you have a driver's license?" And they say, "No." I'll ask them when they're going to get it back. Maybe three, four, five years.

My response to them is the felony is not your issue. The lack of a driver's license is your issue. We have a great number of members who have gone through that, and they're some of our most successful, hardest working people because they appreciate that opportunity that they were given to be able to change their life.

Just a couple of final points. Being able to build a middle class life, a sustainable family career once you complete our apprenticeship program, which ranges three to five years depending on the trade, the average annual income for a union trade in this region is 65,000 a year. Many make 80,000, 90,000 or more. They get full comprehensive health. They have two pensions. They have an annuity.

I mean, this is truly life changing for people. These are not minimum wage jobs by any stretch of the imagination. The sad fact is that
we're not going to be able to get enough people to
take advantage of these jobs. While the driver's
license issue is not the only issue that goes with
that, it's a significant issue.

We're faced with 15,000 members, and when
we go out six years, in that six- to ten-year gap,
we're going to lose about 15,000 members to
retirements. So not only do we need to replace
them. We need to get more people for everything
that's going to happen.

From the perspective of the Builders
Guild, the union trade contractors absolutely
agree with what everyone else has said. I think
it's imperative, and we are very proactive with
this, to develop legislation and a system by which
people can have that second shot at it and really
try to change their lives. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: Thank you,
Mr. Chairman.

Justin, I just want to, again, reiterate
and get it on the record. You've had many
opportunities for good jobs?

MR. ALBRECHT: Yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: Your criminal
convictions didn't stop you from getting those
jobs?

MR. ALBRECHT: No, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: The one thing
that stopped you from getting these jobs is a
driver's license?

MR. ALBRECHT: Exactly.

MR. WALTON: If Justin had his driver's
license, he could go to work today. I can put him
to work today. If I had 200 young men and women
who met the employers' specs, and that's what we
do, if they were like Justin, we could put them to
work today. We could transform a host of
communities.

I'm sorry to interrupt and take it away
from Justin, but it's clear -- as Steve has
outlined, it's clear that there is more work
available than there are bodies to fill those
positions.

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: That's what I was
going to ask Steve. If you have big project like
a cracker plant, most locals are already at full
employment. You don't have anybody on the bench
when you get a project like that.

MR. SHELTON: One of the key things that
I see happening is the amount of welders it will take. They will be employing anywhere from 600 to 1000 welders on any given day down there. So what's going to happen is the shops that are here in Pittsburgh, you have all the small shops around Pittsburgh, those guys can go down to that cracker plant, make $100,000 in a year. Now you've emptied out the small shops. It's just a compounding problem because of just the lack of talent.

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: Again, central to this is you would probably be able to pick up that talent if they had a driver's license?

MR. SHELTON: No doubt about it. You have a young man sitting over here right now in the welding program. As we speak, there's five other guys over in the welding program right now, state certified welders. We're certifying them in four months. I can't get them to that cracker plant. They don't have driver's licenses.

So we're working with the local shops, trying to get them into local shops, but it would be a whole lot easier. As this gentleman just articulated, there's not enough bodies. The jobs are there requiring a driver's license. If we can
put driver's licenses in their hands, it's the
difference from a $15 an hour job to a $20 to $25
an hour job with benefits, 401(k) and everything
else that comes along with it. Great jobs working
with the unions.

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: Thank you.
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: Representative
Saccone.

REPRESENTATIVE SACCONE: I'd just like to
comment. I grew up working with my hands. I did
labor. I did construction, became an aircraft
mechanic. For some people, there's something
about working with your hands. It's transforming
for some people. Everywhere I tour -- I toured
these trade schools.

I just talked to some students down here.
Same thing. Some of them will say you know what?
I might have wandered around and got in trouble
before, but I found that I like to fix things or I
like to lay brick. Every day after I lay brick,
when I see my project done, I love it. I found
something in my life that I want to do now. It
could be a job that could produce an income for my
family and it's something I really love. It's
getting me off the track and the bad things I was
doing before.

That's another aspect of this whole
thing. Yes, these are good paying jobs, but
sometimes some of these people just need to find
something in life that they love, that they want
to do, that they can also earn them some money.

I've heard a lot of people say for years
now, "People just don't want to work." "We can't
find people that want to work." We'll I'm telling
you you have thousands of people that want to work
in Pennsylvania. They just can't get there.

That's what this whole thing is about.
We want to give them the chance to get there so
they can do what they love to do and that they
found can transform their life. I'm just trying
to summarize what all of you said. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: Representative Kortz.

REPRESENTATIVE KORTZ: Thank you,
Mr. Chairman, and thank you, gentlemen, for your
testimony and very compelling testimony.

Mr. Chairman, a comment and a question.
The comment is this: It's already been mentioned
about the cracker plant, thousands of jobs. It's
not on the bus line at all. They have to have a
car. They have to have wheels to get there. They have to have a driver's license.

Another comment, we passed Act 89 three years ago next month. And in Act 89 we're fixing a lot of roads and bridges and those gentlemen that are fixing those roads and bridges have to drive. We have another big project starting in a few years, Mon Valley Expressway. They're going to hire tens of thousands of people to build that roadway, that $2 billion roadway. It's going to start right here in Jefferson, come down past Kennywood, go across the river. They're going to build a bridge. It's going to head down to Monroeville. We're going to need people that have wheels to get to that place to work. Simple as that. There's no bus line to take you where you're going to be out in the middle of the woods in Dravosburg to build that road, build that bridge. We're going to need people. We're going to need them to have wheels.

My question is this. Mr. Walton, you said your group is a national organization.

MR. WALTON: Yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE KORTZ: Have you had conversations with your counterparts in some of
these other 44 states where they do have the
nondriver suspension removed from the feds? Have
you had conversations with your counterparts and
has that helped them? Any feedback on that issue?

MR. WALTON: Relative to the driver's
license issue, it is problematic in many
locations. Over the last two months, I have met
with our counterparts in the Detroit where our
organization is working with Detroit construction
trades. Just this past week I spent a number of
days in St. Louis where I met with our
counterparts in St. Louis. The U.S. Government is
building a $1.7 billion geo-spatial intelligence
center right there in north St. Louis. And we're
building up an alliance on how we can manage and
do some of the similar things we're doing here in
Pittsburgh.

I've met with individuals in Baltimore
less than three months ago about moving a replica
of what we do in Pittsburgh to Baltimore. We are
doing some unique kinds of work. But again, those
artificial barriers that are there need to be
removed. If we are going to transform our
communities, if we are going to really reduce the
cost of doing business of government, we have to
remove those artificial barriers.

If I may stray just a second, while I

don't want to convey in any way, shape, form or
manner that everyone we do business with has been
previously incarcerated, one out of three
individuals that we do do business with has been.
In the federal system, according to the latest
numbers that I have had shared with me, it cost
$29,000 a year to house someone in the federal
correctional system. In Pennsylvania as recently
as four years ago, the costs in SCI was $36,000 a
year.

If we can reduce the number of people
that we're housing in our correctional system,
that reduces our cost of doing business as
government. Those resources can be allocated to
other critical segments of our society and just
reducing the cost of government in its entirety.

So it seems to me that those artificial
barriers like driver's license suspensions in its
entirety need to be reviewed, need to be modified,
need to be addressed in a constructive way so we
can add taxpayers to the roll as opposed to adding
to the cost of government doing business.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: Thank you.
We're going to go to Representative Gainey, and hopefully we can get on with Judge King here.

REPRESENTATIVE GAINNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I firmly believe sometimes you got to fall down in order to find life. I believe everybody does have a gift.

My question is: How many people come through your program feeling that they really have a second chance. You guys have given them the second chance, and now they're really ready to go to work. They've moved from boys to men, girl to woman. They've completed the course. They're ready to go to work. Then they feel rejected because of the driver's license situation, and they end up retreating back to the same world we tried so hard to remove them out of?

MR. WALTON: Justin, what did we talk about today?

MR. ALBRECHT: Same lifestyle I was living. I hung in there. I'm sticking in there. This program really changed my whole mental mind, like taking me to different trade centers. Like Saccone said, it enlightened me. I was proud of
myself. The driver's license thing is just
killing me, man. I have so many job opportunities
I just can't get.

MR. WALTON: And Justin is just one
example. This man sitting here, Al Hinds, is
another one of our graduates that we -- really I
don't know what the judge is going to talk about,
but we found some judiciary that have taken the
extraordinary step of reducing his fines to a
point that he can pay and now he's been able to
transform his life again. He's currently employed
by the Allegheny County Department of Parks. So
he's been able to transform his life.

We were able to find a couple of judges
in Butler County that we were able to write
letters and urge them based upon his performance
that he needed a second chance. So we've been
able to make a difference. It happens every day.

This young lady here is out in the street
every day making a difference, recruiting people,
identifying their needs and their challenges and
building a network that we can fix what has gone
so wrong in too many people's lives. We want to
add value. We want to build a network. We want
to make America and Pittsburgh...
MR. WALTON: As Ronald Reagan said --
I'll give you a Ronald Reagan quote -- the House
on the Hill.

REPRESENTATIVE GAINLEY: I thank everyone
here. The reality of the situation is everybody
here falls down. Some of them got back up. But
at the end of the day, it's about changing the way
we do these driver's licenses, removing something
that keeps people from going to work. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: Thank you very much.

Our next witness is from the Special
Court Judge's Association, Honorable Richard King,
the District President of Allegheny County.

Thank you so much for being here. We
have a hard time staying on track. I know you
have a busy schedule. We apologize. We think
your testimony is worth it.

JUDGE KING: I'd like to thank you for
being invited. My name is Richard King. I am a
magisterial district judge in Allegheny County,
specifically the City of Pittsburgh and the
Borough of Mount Oliver. I'm here representing
the Special Court Judge's Association of
Pennsylvania, which is a group that represents the
magisterial district judges as well as the Philadelphia municipal court judges.

As a group, we don't really get involved for or against any set legislation. We help in working with the House and Senate on bills to make sure that they work. A lot of the bills we have no issues and believe that it's the right thing to do.

There's a couple things on 1777. It states in the bill an established amnesty program shall be administered by the court in cooperation with the department. We would have no real way to administer the program because we have no access to certified driving records, access to know if they have violations in multiple offices even within the county, let alone the state.

We feel it should be a program administered by PennDoT in cooperation with the courts. A lot of that has to do with amnesty on fines. We do and are required to have paid determination hearings to get people on payment plans and as low as they can. One of the problems in the vehicle code, we are not allowed to give community service as an alternative to fines. We're prohibited from that. And I believe it goes
back many, many years.

The ability is to pay money or go to jail. In every other case, criminal cases that are reduced, nontraffic violations, harassment, public drunkenness, whatever it may be, we have the ability to give community service rather than fines. We do not under Title 75.

That would be a big help to a lot of people if that got changed, that as an alternative, we could give community service, not at the original adjudication, but when it comes to the fine and cost hearing. Right now we're prohibited from both.

As an example, if someone has a red light violation, we would still suggest that the initial would be the fine. And then if the person didn't have the ability to pay or was struggling to pay, then during the fine and cost post-adjudication, there would be the ability to do the community service.

As far as the rest of the bill, it does refer to the payment plans, that the suspension would be lifted. That does happen now and would continue to happen under this bill. The stories that were told here we hear every day, every day.
As much as people are in suspension status due to nonpayment of fines, there are more people that are just in suspension status. They don't owe any money to anyone. They got caught up in this web. It's not uncommon at all in my office and many others to have someone come in that's suspended for 5, 7, 12, 16, 22 years. Much of it goes back to a truancy violation when people had a suspension.

But PennDoT is not required to mail anything certified. People are very transient. A notification will come to someone's house. The restoration fee he spoke of, if you don't acknowledge and enter the restoration fee, the time doesn't start. So you have someone at 16 or 15 got a truancy violation, was found guilty, had a six-month suspension or three-month suspension. Parents moved or a parent got it and thought "I'm not paying $60. I don't even own a car."

Six years later, he's trying get into a program, trying to get a GED. He still has to serve the six-month license suspension. We see that happen all the time on nondriving violations, truancy and the underage drinking. The truancy (indecipherable) now gives us -- before it was
mandatory -- and now it gives us the right as an option to suspend the license or not. In a case where it would matter or we feel it would matter, we could. If it didn't, we wouldn't.

Underage drinking is still a mandatory situation. We had hoped at one point there was something that on those type of issues, regardless of serving the time, at age 21 they automatically were eliminated. That never happened. But that's another huge hangup. Younger people don't always get the notifications, mainly because they still depend on their parents to do it and that doesn't happen.

We have no problems. We want to offer that our legal code committee works on House Bill 1777 to try to work on how that program would work, be administered. We would assume that PennDoT -- the person would give the documentation. PennDoT would then print some type of a document they would either mail to us or that person would bring to us. Then we can institute the rest of the plan on the amnesty on fines or reducing the fines or whatever that may be.

That's what we would suggest the bill would work. But like I stated, I can't state
enough, unfortunately, we see people in situations
like this on a daily basis wrapped up in a lot of
suspension time that, quite frankly, doesn't seem
to make sense. They lose their ability to drive.
And people in situations do drive because in
today's time, they need to feed their family or do
something. So they drive, get hung up again. Now
they get another driving suspension, which is a
year if you're convicted of it.

Many times they'll plead their case to
the police officers. The officers will maybe ask
to amend the section that doesn't give you
suspension time. They're still sitting on six,
eight, ten years of time, which is not productive
for anybody. As far as any worry of the fine, a
lot of these cases will not collect that money now
because they don't have the ability to do any type
of a job to get money to pay a fine because the
suspension. So it's a Catch-22.

That's all we really have. No problem
with any of the bill. Just on 1777, try to work
on that. We wouldn't be able to have the ability
to actually administer the program.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: Mr. Arroyo, the judge
is here. Would you respond to the judge's opening
comments.

MR. ARROYO:  Section 1592(b) actually states that the court shall provide the department with a list of all individuals who are delinquent in paying fines.

JUDGE KING:  We do do that.  When someone is delinquent in paying fines, we issue what's called a DL 38, and that's transmitted to PennDoT and then puts them in a temporary suspension status regardless if they're suspended or not.  It also adds a temporary suspension status because that happens if they do not respond to a citation, moving violation, or if they are delinquent on paying fines and costs for legal code violations.  That does happen on that end.

But as far as knowing who would qualify on some of the other issues, it would be PennDoT that would need to process the amnesty request and then send us something.  That's all I'm saying.

MR. ARROYO:  PennDoT doesn't actually track fees and fines.  So if an individual applied for amnesty, they have to pay the court the court's fine or fee.  So I see where the court would be the party to approve whether someone has been granted amnesty and then that information
sent to the Department, and we would take it from there.

But we don't track financial information in regards to -- we receive the default in payment or 1533 CCA. We record failure to respond and default in payments. It's where we don't make calculations based off of certain other outside -- because it said in the bill that the individual has to pay a certain percentage if they fall into like a scale where you have to pay a hundred percent of the fines, but then the penalties and fees are basically excused. Then if you file your appeal for amnesty within the first 90 days --

JUDGE KING: What penalties or fees have you encountered?

MR. ARROYO: The bill states fines, fees and penalties. I'm assuming they're late fees.

JUDGE KING: There would be constable fees. That's the other issue. If they don't respond and you send out a warrant and a constable comes, a fee gets paid. Then to waive the fees, that would either be -- somehow go back onto the county because the system (indecipherable).

I'm glad you brought that up. That was another issue, fees, court costs, because there's
a multiple amount of court costs nowadays on --
the fine has stayed the same. $25 red light fine
is still the same, but when you add up all the
fees, it comes out to $130, emergency EMS and all
those other fees.

Does that get eliminated? Does the
county get eliminated from their portion of the
court cost? Does the state get eliminated?

Those were issues that we assume
PennDoT -- like who would we call? PennDoT would
certify someone is qualified for that. That's
where our committee is confused and wanted to meet
further about the bill.

MR. ARROYO: I'm not sure.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: In terms of both the
1777 process discussion, I want to make sure our
staff listens to this because I would imagine each
driver would start out with a requirements letter
listing everything that he or she has to do, which
happens now, right? If you want to get your
license back, you have to pay a fine in Butler
County, maybe pay a fine in Ohio for that matter,
Philadelphia we have people with Jersey fines, and
then work through it.

It's going to be a tremendous educational
process. It's probably going to fall on you.

We'll continue to work that out.

Sir, identify yourself for the purposes
of the record.

MR. OSHELL: I'm Donald Oshell with the
Prothonotaries and Clerks of Court Association for
Pennsylvania. With me is Bryan Kline,
Westmoreland County Clerk of Court. We use the
Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts
database systems both at the common pleas level
and district court level. Ours is the Common
Pleas Case Management System. Theirs is the
Magisterial Judge System. The system interacts
with PennDoT electronically in regard to DL 21s,
DL 23s, DL 38s in notifying the Department of
suspensions.

When I read the bill, it would probably
be more likely refer to the Administrative Office
of Pennsylvania Courts in developing a listing of
all those drivers who have been suspended for
failure to pay costs, fines and restitution as
well as those failing to respond. From that
listing, the court's perspective as to what is
owed, PennDoT can then respond and develop the
program in conjunction.
I agree with the judge, something that we would need to clarify in this language going forward. My initial read of the bill was it was simply going after defaults, but it seems the scope is broader. If that's the case, that's a whole different cart of apples.

We were concerned it was going to affect our enforcement mechanisms. A lot of the business practice that the bill describes we engage in at the common pleas level as well as I'm sure the district courts do as well. So I think it's replication of our interactions with defendants in failing to paying costs, fines and restitution.

If it's broader than that and it would help eliminate successive offenses and suspensions, I think that my association might be in favor of it, but then it would likely generate a lot of those cases getting their act together, all the court documents (indecipherable).

That's kind of where we're at. There is a lot of language in the bill that needs to be clarified from an actual working standpoint.

JUDGE KING: That's what our committee wanted to work with you on. It's really not insurmountable at all. The Administrative Office
of the Pennsylvania Courts could do that because they have it within the system. Because right now even when someone tries to go to PennDoT, most people in Pittsburgh actually go AAA, have to pay money to get money the certified record because for some reason, they can't get it for free from PennDoT. That's what I'm told. We don't get involved on that end. I only know what I have in my office. That would be the nuts and bolts of it.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: It sounds like we have a process to continue to work out. Make sure our staff gets your information. Usually if I took the chance of calling on people from the audience, we could go really sideways. I'm glad it was very relevant. That's why we usually don't do it. You looked credible.

Any other questions any question for Judge King?

JUDGE KING: We will be meeting in Harrisburg, our quarterly meeting, the 13th and 14th of November. Our vehicle code committee would love to talk further about this just on the nuts and bolts. The idea is great. Nobody has a problem with it. Hopefully it's successful, and
we can to get to help people.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: We appreciate your comments. I'm sure that we'll be back to you to coordinate. We're going to continue to hear about why we should have this bill, but the how sometimes is a problem. But we'll get there. Thank you.

JUDGE KING: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: We're going to next hear from Joyce Douglass. Joyce Douglass is from the probation and parole system.

MS. HOLLIS: Thank you so much. My name is Anna Hollis. I represent an organization called Amachi Pittsburgh. We provide support to children and families of the incarcerated, including custodial parents as well as incarcerated parents just before they're being released back to the community.

We take a holistic approach to ultimately breaking the intergenerational cycle of incarceration. We want to make sure we provide the tools, training and support that children and families need to break that cycle themselves, to make those decisions that are going to lead to more productive lives. We are working with a
number of organizations who are represented here today. We can't really move the needle on the issues we're confronting without policy reform.

So I thank you, Representative Saccone and Representative Wheatley and the others, who have introduced legislation that will enable parents to -- and not just parents. I recognize that there are many individuals who are incarcerated who are not parents. We have a particular focus on parents because more than half of those who are incarcerated have minor children, and those are the ones who suffer most, particularly the trauma.

Thank you for the work you're doing. I hope we can rely on you to advance the bills on the driver's license suspension requirement. I think we have a bit of a unique perspective, not that you need much more of a case to support this legislation.

The unique perspective we offer is from what children and families suffer when a parent is incarcerated. I don't think that people think much about that. I know children and families haven't been considered much in the policy arena, particularly when it comes to the criminal justice
system. People focus on the offender and the
victims of that offender. People just don't
realize how kids are affected and how caregivers
are affected because they're the brunt of this.

The burden is really borne by women and
children. So there has been a growing body of
evidence to show what the impact has been on kids
and family. There was a very large scale and
recently released reports in the Journal of
Adolescence that document the effects on kids and
families with regard to their mental and physical
health outcomes, with regard to academic outcomes
for youth and with regard to particularly
financial. That's a huge thing because I think
recent studies have really shown the link between
poverty and incarceration.

When parents don't have the ability to
provide for their families, they're, in effect,
placing their kids in a situation where they're
going to grow up poor and continue in that cycle.
That's what leads to the kinds of behaviors that
lead to incarceration. We have had focus groups
with our teams over the years and just asked them
to share with us how they experience parental
incarceration day to day.
One of the things we learned that was so disturbing for me was that the boys in particular feel a tremendous sense of responsibility to step up to the plate. When they know how much mom is struggling, as the man in the family when dad is away, they're looking for ways to help support the family.

A huge national study showed that the average family takes on $13,000 in debt including attorneys' fees and restitution and all the fines and fees associated with having a parent incarcerated, 13,000, when the parent who is incarcerated on average made $15,000 before incarceration. They've, in fact, taken on as much as that parent made in income. As I mentioned, it's mostly moms, aunts, grandmothers who are bearing the brunt of that cost.

As a result of that, they have difficulty, about half, meeting their basic needs including food, housing, utilities, transportation and clothing. And what we learned from our boys, they are willing to make a bad decision, to make a quick run, quick drug run or something to that effect, in order to bring some income into the home, bring resources into the home to help meet
their basic needs.

That's a terrible predicament to be in. We want to get the kids out of that situation so they don't have to make those difficult decisions and continue to fight. I'd like you to consider the financial implications of parents. For us this is an accountability issue, and we think that everything that we can do to ensure that parents are in a position to be accountable for providing the financial support to their children and families, the emotional support to their children and families, but also stepping up to help the caregivers who have been taking care of everything in their extended absences, so they can step up and help in getting kids to and from school, be able to drive and participate in activities their kids are involved in, getting kids to and from doctor's appointments, being able to make it to and from their own appointments, NA or AA meetings, so they are in a position to support their kids emotionally.

When they don't have the ability to drive, the burden continues to fall on the family members. Everyone has to adjust their schedules to make sure they get to whatever job they're able
to secure, make sure they can get to their
appointments, to their doctor’s appointments,
things like that.

I think if you could look at this from a
different perspective and recognize that we aren’t
asking for handout. We’re asking to hold parents
accountable for support of their kids and making
sure we’re partners with them in helping to break
this cycle. The University of Pittsburgh
evaluated our programming we provide,
evidence-based programming. We were able to
demonstrate a 92 percent success rate with
avoiding any involvement in the juvenile justice
system and adult criminal justice system.

I don’t know if you know this, but the
Department of Justice in the past has thrown out
statistics that more than half of these kids who
kill, their parents are behind bars. We
vehemently oppose that. We need to do everything
we can from the community side to support the kids
and parents. I’m asking you to recognize that the
parents who are returning home need to be able to
act in gainful employment to earn a living wage so
we can help to break the cycle. They should be
the ones paying down that debt the families took
on. It shouldn't be the custodial parent, the
kids and young boys figuring out ways to help mom
buy groceries and to get the lights and gas turned
back on.

This is a tremendous burden for kids.
They shouldn't be in this position. Anything that
you can do including passing these bills I
appreciate. When you are passing bills and
drafting legislation that's going to impact
adults, remember there are kids and family members
involved.

Kids who have had incarcerated parents
have a higher incidence of attempting suicide, of
engaging in substance abuse, 2.5 to 4 times more
likely than their peers to experience mental
health issues. We know there's a strong link to
crime and incarceration.

Thank you for your attention. Please
remember the children and help us to continue to
break that cycle of incarceration.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: Thank you.
Joyce Douglass.

MS. DOUGLASS: My name is Joyce Douglass.
I was employed by the Commonwealth as a parole
agent in the Pittsburgh district for 25 years. I
retired in 2015. During that time, I believe everyone deserved a chance to set a goal for reentry. There are many roadblocks that prevented that.

Upon my retirement, I had told one of the individuals on my caseload, who you'll hear testify shortly, I would try to do something to change this. I had no idea how I was going to do that.

I want to thank you, Rick Saccone, so much for taking the time to sit down when I went to him with this issue to look at it and to understand it and to really understand that this is something that is so desperately needed to be changed. Earlier in my career, I discovered those on my caseload I could help and those I couldn't help. It was a continuum.

I had about 20 percent at the top I would have never even have had to look at. They would not reoffend. I had about 20 percent at the bottom who were ingrained in the criminal element. They were not ready to change. There was really nothing I could do to change that. The best I could do with them was just monitor them for public safety.
But I had that 60 percent in the middle that I had to work with, however, and with those people my job and their job was really burdensome in many respects because I often felt I was setting them up for failure. They could come into my office, and I would sit there initially and go over their conditions, tell them what they needed to do. Things they needed, find employment, attend NA and AA meetings and other mandatory meetings, support themselves and their families, pay their costs, fines, restitution, supervision fees, urine bills.

And then I would look at them knowing they didn't have the means to accomplish this because we had taken away their driver's license. I would just see many times people who came in and talked to me had no idea they did not have a driver's license until I told them. Every hope and dream they had while they were thinking about changing their life was dashed because they had no means to do what they had planned to do.

There were many of the people that I had that had been trained in the institutions. Some were trained like for license inspections and so forth, but when they came home, they couldn't do
those job they had been trained for in the
institution because we had taken away their
driver's license. Keep in mind, most employers
and landlords require a valid license as a
condition of employment or apartment.

Not having a license creates an economic
instability and undermines occupational, housing
and educational choices for these people,
effectively keeping them in poverty. And if they
follow the rules, they have to settle for
unemployment or a substandard job and forgo their
education. Some say public transportation is the
solution, and it isn't. Aside from diminishing
bus routes in areas and other areas that have
none, most of the jobs in the metropolitan areas
in the last 20 years have moved away from the
central business district.

Now only one in five jobs are located
within one to three miles of the central business
district. 30 percent are three to ten miles away,
and 45 percent are 10 to 35 miles away, and all
these jobs that are there are just unavailable for
somebody who does not have a driver's license.

In my experience, there are three
roadblocks to successful reentry, safe sober
affordable housing, employment and license suspensions, and of those three, license suspensions is the easiest to rectify. If we rectify that situation, there will be many more job opportunities, and people will be able to secure housing.

According to the American Association of Motor Vehicles, there's no evidence at all that indicates that suspending a person's driver's license for social nonconformance reasons is effective in gaining compliance with the original driver's license suspension. So why do we continue to do it? It's a punishment that is excessively cruel, and I don't think there's anything more cruel than keeping a person from being able to support themselves and their family and having self respect.

Adding another layer of sanctions over and above the criminal penalty, such as license suspension, is excessive. Many individuals find themselves with years of suspension to serve, and this practice is akin to keeping them in a geographic prison. They can only go as far as a bus takes them and many have no buses. They're almost on house arrest because they have no way to
get around.

I hope that you will consider these bills and support them and end this policy we have and allow the fundamental right to successful reentry. I also wanted to mention that I hear the argument that people feel we should still let the courts be able to suspend the license if the court deems because as the policy stands now, the court can suspend a license if they deem a vehicle was used in the commission of a crime.

The problem with that policy is I don't know any crime, unless you commit it in your house, that you don't use a vehicle to commit the crime. It becomes very capricious and arbitrary. Some of those suspensions can be extremely long. And I really think that policy needs to be changed.

Somebody asked a question about how many licenses are suspended for child support. I have some of that information. Matt Stroud from the ACLU was able to get some money because PennDoT did not have those figures available. So we had to pay to have them do the research.

But as far as license suspensions just for child support from 2011 till 2016, just those
suspensions alone were 46,383.

Last year alone, this isn't taking into consideration any of the minor people not paying their tickets kind of suspensions and those things, just the minor list that I have of these suspensions just in the last year was 44,454 just for last year. If anybody would like that information, I can get that to you. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN JOZWIAK: Thank you, Joyce. We appreciate it. I know the more testimony we hear, it looks like we have to even broaden the scope of some of these bills. I appreciate it.

REPRESENTATIVE JOZWIAK: Derek, why don't you start.

MR. DOLANCH: My name is Derek Dolanch. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on license suspensions. I was convicted of burglary that I committed while in active drug addiction. I received a three-and-a-half to seven-year prison term. I was released on October 17, 2013. Upon release, I reported to my parole officer. During my intake, she asked me if I had a driver's license. I told her before I was incarcerated, I had one. I needed to renew it.

She checked on this information and
informed me that I, in fact, had a 22-year suspension. I had no idea my license had been suspended at all, let alone for 22 years.

Initially, I lived with my elderly grandparents. I was required to attend NA meetings and find employment. My elderly grandparents drove me to and from meetings all winter long in a good bit of snow and probably not the optimal conditions to be out. I feel terrible putting them in that situation, having to depend on them and others in my family to drive me to all my appointments, basically everywhere I needed to go.

I decided I wanted to become an ironworker and looking forward to applying to the union. I found out I wasn't eligible because I didn't have a driver's license. Many opportunities for employment weren't available to me.

I lived with my grandparents, then my mother for a while because I couldn't find a job that paid enough to afford my own apartment. I moved in with my girlfriend and found employment several miles away. I actually rode a bicycle to work. I made $10 an hour. That job lasted a year and a half until the business closed. I was on
unemployment. I was unable to find another job. Many places I applied would not even consider me because I didn't have a driver's license and a criminal history.

Finally, I was hired by my current employer and a family friend. The men that I work with make up to $5 an hour more than I do because they can drive work equipment and dump trucks. Initially, a coworker that lived nearby drove me to work. Since then, he left the company, and that job has fallen mainly on my significant other to do all of our responsibilities because I cannot drive.

I have a son. He's two and a half years old. My significant other is responsible to get me to work, getting him to and from daycare, all of his doctor's and dental appointments, all grocery shopping and everything that is everyday life. This puts an enormous strain on our relationship. We have different schedules.

She is up early in order for me to make it to work on time, and then she has to take care of him and get herself ready to go to work on time. She takes him to daycare later on days that she doesn't have to be at work until 10:00 a.m.
I'm usually done about two hours before she's done with work. My son has to stay in daycare two extra hours because I cannot pick him up. On my days off, he stays at home with me. We are stuck in the house. I want to take him fishing and to the park and enjoy time with my son, but I can't drive.

Once when I was with him, he fell and hit his head. I had to call frantically to his mother who was at work because I couldn't take him to MedExpress or to the doctor.

I will max out my parole next month, four years without a violation or dirty urine. I still pay fines and restitution monthly. I still have no license. I have to be put in the position that will force me to drive, to break the law. Several times my significant other has had to work late, and we could not get our son home from daycare. That's just one example.

I know I've committed crimes. I feel like I've paid my debt tremendously. Next month I will have completed my seven-year sentence. I'm still being punished and so is my family. I don't think being permitted to not provide for my family is somehow serving a purpose. How is a 22-year
suspension just? All I'm asking for is the
opportunity to not be dependent or a burden to
others, to be able to say that I can support my
family. I say this on behalf of others who are
just like me. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE JOZWIAK: Thank you,
Derek.

Chelsey.

MR. SIRMONS: My name is Chelsey Sirmons.

My story is similar to his. I come from an
environment I made some bad choices. During this
time, I had my license. Then throughout active
addiction, convictions of simple possession and
paraphernalia, my license was suspended until
2026.

I'm currently a student in two schools,
one for social and human services, which I
graduate in December, and also CCAC for drug and
alcohol counseling, which I graduate in May, which
is going to be hectic. Come January I have to do
my practicum of 200 hours. How am I going to get
there?

I just left a job due to not being able
to get there. I have two younger children that I
struggle to see. Recovery is my primary purpose.
Meetings are essential to my well-being for anything, and I struggle to get to them.

It's just I'm not understanding how many times I have to be penalized. I completed drug and alcohol. I completed my probation. I'm two and a half years clean, a student and life's progression, but there's still this barrier that does not allow me to like move on and conduct myself as a man should.

An example, at a friend's house yesterday I get a call. My grandmother had a stroke yesterday. I couldn't get to my grandmother until 7:30 to see her in the hospital because I had to wait for this friend to come and take me to the hospital. I'm not understanding. There are a lot of things -- contrary to my life, it's an overwhelming stress. On top of in my active addiction in my past lifestyle and my bad choices, I've been shot twice and left for dead. So there's that fear every day I go to get on a bus am I going to run into one of these guys.

My court costs are paid. My restitution is paid. Everything is paid. I sent away for the probationary license, and they sent it back to me denying me, saying you have to be three to six
years out before you can get it.

I'm not understanding this, not seeing
this on the website that I went through. Now I'm
waiting to apply for the occupational limited
license, but I have drug convictions, so I'm not
eligible.

I wanted to share my testimony and thank
all of you for hearing me. And hopefully, we can
find a way to get a solution to give back. My
past is a part of me. It doesn't define me. I
feel as though this whole license situation is
trying to define me and place me in this box that
I refuse to be in. I'm not going back to where I
came from.

My parents get sleep now. They're not
going crazy calls. You know what I mean? They
can call me, and I can pick up the phone. It's
just a struggle of juggling life and waiting on a
bus. I spend more than half my life on a bus
going to school. I got to wake up two hours early
to start everything.

My debt to society is paid. I completed
probation. I completed my time. I completed
rehab. I did all that was required of me. I'm
not asking for a handout. I'm just asking for
some fairness. Just be fair.

   With that, I thank you all for hearing me. I hope we can find some solution, not just for me, but for many others. Thank you.

   REPRESENTATIVE JOZWIAK: Thank you and Derek. That's why we're here. Sometimes we have to look back on what we did and how we did it and whether it makes sense. So I appreciate it.

   James.

   MR. SED: My name is Jim Sed. I'm an ex-offender. As such, I am very active in recruiting, job placement, retraining, workforce development, volunteer work. I also am the director of operations for a sales and service company out of Nebraska. We have several new car dealerships and washes under management. My responsibility is to the washes in this part of the country, operations, acquisition and business development.

   A little history that pertains to the issues that we're talking about. I celebrated my 40th birthday in Phoenix, Arizona. I was a corporate CEO. I was also in the throes of a gripping opiate addiction. The nine years that followed were a continuous uncontrollable downward
Shortly after my 49th birthday, I was escorted to a federal courtroom by U.S. marshals in handcuffs in a business suit. A 130-month prison sentence followed. I spent the first three weeks in Allegheny County Jail in withdrawal and very uncertain about the future. So the fog cleared. I made a decision that I had to get my life back on track, make a commitment to myself, make a commitment to my family, to my son, my son who just turned 15 when I went in and was 22 and about to graduate college when I came home.

What lay ahead at that point in time seemed insurmountable to me until I met many other men in similar situations, the same situation as mine. We had a common bond. As my head cleared and I got clarity and I began to make progress, I started to think what I needed to do wasn't going to be attainable.

So I began to align myself with people with like minds. I did take very proactive approaches to reentry, but I was not unique. I had the opportunity to witness transformations in many, many, many other men. I interacted personally over the eight years that I was
incarcerated with thousands of men, men who came
from conditions in their life who didn't stand a
chance. Not only did they not have opportunity.
They would not have recognized it if it hit them
in the face.

These men here -- I say men. We're all
incarcerated men -- found hope. Unhealthy
behaviors were stripped of them. They aligned
themselves with people who could best help them
when they returned home.

It's an interesting phenomenon to where
the conditions surrounding someone change and
their cognition and approach change along with
them. That's what I witnessed. What I also
witnessed was the fact that the single biggest
issue with every man who was coming out of prison
and wanted to do things the right way, I need to
get my driver's license back. I have to be able
to get around. I've got to get to work.

So we used our network inside. We used
case management and councilors inside to have
licenses reinstated prior to release.
Unfortunately, the only individuals, myself
included, who could have driver's licenses
reinstated were those who did not have a
court-imposed suspension.

There's the disconnect. At least if you have a suspension, you have an opportunity to get reinstatement. I came out, got my driver's license reinstated and began to rebuild.

The irony is, and Representative Saccone touched on it and the resolution we're talking about today speaks to it, mine was a federal drug conviction, federal drug conviction. Yet the mandate that makes the State of Pennsylvania suspend licenses for drug convictions is federal.

My license was not suspended as a result of my activities. My license went away as a result of the length of time I was incarcerated. We talk about the next step, how complicated would that be. Let's get to the next step. That's what we're here to do.

The window of opportunity for a man or woman coming out of incarceration to really successfully actively reenter is much, much narrower than anybody thinks. I witnessed it firsthand in real time as I transitioned from prison to the halfway house, back out into the world. I didn't have a license. I had to walk to a bus stop a couple of miles. Although my final
destination was in the city, I still had to get to the bus stop.

Many people don't even have that opportunity. The window is very narrow. And when hopes are dashed, and when failure begins to sink in, guess what else happens. Unhealthy relationships, destructive patterns of behavior, falling back into familiarity, which is the default move, and criminality again. I need money. I need to take care of this. I need to take care of my mother, as Anna mentioned earlier. All this stuff is true.

So now I'm once again employed. I have so much power, like nobody you know, towards hiring ex-offenders. I still have to operate in the best interest of the company I work for. For that reason, first of all, I've experienced some tremendous joy in putting men back to work and women, but I've also endured the pain of having a difficult conversation with someone who, but for the lack of ability to get to and from the workplace, deserve the same opportunities, was my sentiment.

Employers are self leaning towards ex-offenders now. Reentry initiatives are being
supported. Recidivism is the buzz word. So with all of these things being at what appears to be the forefront, I hope this is true and not just a media event, what appears to be the forefront is reentry, reducing recidivism, reducing incarceration, reducing the incarcerated population, why do we deny opportunities to the men and women. It flies in the face of logic.

One other thing. I offered a job to a man a couple of weeks ago who had been incarcerated for 15 years who was in the process of getting his license back because he could, not because he wasn't -- because he was suspended for any other reason. And he sat down and said to me and then he broke down in tears. That's how impactful a second chance is. That's how impactful a fresh start is.

If I hadn't had a driver's license, my own opportunity would not have come. This only makes sense. Let's not get caught up in the red tape like always happens. Get this thing over with. Push it through, and let's move onto something else. There's a lot of things that need to be done. This is a great first step. Thank you so much. Sorry I spoke a little longer than I
was supposed to. I appreciate the time.

REPRESENTATIVE JOZWIAK: We appreciate it. Thank you, Jim, Chelsey and Derek. We appreciate you for telling your story.

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: If somebody was reporting to you and they came in and they had a traffic violation for driving under a suspended license because they had to get somewhere, what would happen to them if they were on probation, on parole?

MS. DOUGLASS: Things have changed so much. Originally back in 1990 when I started, they probably would have gone back to jail. We would have put them back. Now I believe what they're doing is maybe putting something on, an ankle monitor or some sort of sanction like that. It used to be way more severe than it is now.

The problem now that's going on apparently is that there are no halfway house beds anymore where they put people when there have been issues. The only thing they do now is put on an ankle monitor.

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: If they wear ankle monitors and they violated again, what would happen?
MS. DOUGLASS: Again, it's quite a different story today. Now probably I'd say probably nothing.

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: That answers it.

Thank you.

MR. HUFFMAN: Good morning. My name is Nathan Huffman. I was told we have a few minutes. Forgive me if I speak quickly. I'm going to talk to you about some of the ways not having a license has affected my life.

Despite being in recovery from heroin addiction for the past nine years, my license remains suspended and will remain suspended for several more years to come unless a change is made. The most significant way not having a driver's license has impacted my life is my limitation on where and what kind of work I can do.

Despite having a bachelor's degree from California University of Pennsylvania in justice studies and again being in recovery for quite some time, I have been unable to find permanent full-time work. Having a criminal record, despite being devoid of any violent crimes or felonies, makes finding employment challenging enough.
Regardless of my degree and years of doing the next right thing, I've been turned down for countless job opportunities.

Now, imagine, if you will, having a ten-minute radius around your home that you must find work. Factor in living in the country away from any public transportation as well as having the aforementioned criminal record. It makes finding gainful employment and moving on with my life nearly impossible.

The only reason I'm able to work at all is because I'm fortunate actually to have a loving family who continues to support me. Because of this, I've been able to take on a volunteer position at the Allegheny County Jail. Every Friday morning I teach an addiction and recovery class to inmates on a faith-based recovery pod called the HOPE pod, a program I graduated in 2008.

I've been doing this for over a year now. Because of my volunteer work, I'm blessed to work with the HOPE organization. Twice a week I teach reintegration classes to inmates who had been sentenced to life in prison as juveniles but now as a result of the 2012 Supreme Court decision are
eligible for parole.

This job has done so much for me emotionally and spiritually. Working with men, some who have been incarcerated for over 40 years, it's done so much for me that I decided to pursue prison ministry as a career.

While I'm beyond grateful for this position, it provides nowhere near the amount of money necessary to move on with my life. It's a wonderful stepping stone and a tremendous opportunity to get my foot in the door. However, full-time employment is paramount to achieving my goals.

There are additional opportunities available through the HOPE organization, positions I know I'm qualified for. Unfortunately, without a driver's license, I can't get to them.

In addition to helping me with finding full-time employment, having a driver's license would be a tremendous help to my family in so many ways, none greater than attending to my mother who's suffered with multiple sclerosis for over 15 years. While I attempt to help my father in any way I can, I can only do so much, but I could be doing so much more. Having to drive me to the
subway so I can get to work, my doctor's
appointments, not to mention running my mom to her
doctor's appointments and everywhere else she
needs to go, is extremely taxing to my father.

Add to that grocery shopping as well as
every other necessity required to run a family.
At nearly 73 years old, he's being run ragged. If
I were permitted to run the simplest of errands,
running to the pharmacy to pick up one of my
mother's multiple prescriptions or to the store
for bread and milk, these things that most people
take for granted would be a tremendous help.
These are the years when kids are supposed to
start looking after their parents, not the other
way around.

In closing, I'd like to thank you all who
attended today and for allowing me to speak.
January 5, 2008 I made a decision to do whatever
was necessary to get my life back. Since then,
I've remained out of jail and in recovery. I've
used the time since then to not only better my
life, but the lives of countless others. I've
done everything that's been asked of me and then
some.

Writing this reminds of me of a time
prior to my addiction when I simultaneously had a driver's license, a private pilot's license, motorcycle permit and a boating license. Those were some of the best times of my life largely due to the fact that I was able to explore the world and all of the wonderful things that it offers. That's the type of life I envision when I made that decision almost a decade ago.

Please understand that I do not consider myself a victim. My license is suspended because of the decisions I made in active addiction. I stand before you today not asking to just be handed my license back. Just give me a chance. Every time I work with the juvenile lifers brings feelings of hope and joy because we've shown that despite being convicted of the most egregious crime, taking the life of another, we decided to give them a chance.

I implore you please give us a chance. If I were given my license back today, I wouldn't have a job tomorrow. I'd have one today. Please give us a chance not 5, 10, 20 years from now. Give us a chance today. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE JOZWIAK: Thank you.

MR. DIXON: Good afternoon. My name is
Stefon Dixon. I was convicted of possession with intent to deliver that cost me my license for two years. I've been filling out job applications in person and filling them out online. They are requiring me to have a license and reliable transportation.

I applied for school. I applied for TIP. I completed the masonry program, taking a bike to work. They moved me on to the welding program. I've been doing good there. There's job opportunities out there for me at the cracker plant in Beaver County, but I'm not being considered to be at these places because I don't have a license. And these jobs are paying over $20 an hour.

It's very discouraging knowing the work is out there and I've gone through training, waking up every morning to get there to better myself and better my life, and I still won't be able to do it. I'm not able to take care of my family the right way that I need to and want to.

I live in Turtle Creek. It takes three buses and over two hours to get to see my family. I'm on house arrest. I spend 10 to 12 hours a week. I have family and friends. They don't mind
helping me to go to places, driving me around, but
I've become a burden on them. I feel hopeless. I feel weak. I feel like I'm not in control of my own life. I'm struggling financially to go to school, and I'm struggling to be a father and a fiancé.

In order to change this, I feel like I would need my license to obtain these job opportunities to be a better man to my fiancée and to my family. I can assist them with daily tasks like taking them to the doctor's, diapers, picking them up, dropping them off at daycare, swim class, just being there at a moment's notice whenever my kids are sick. In some circumstances, I even had to drive without a license. My fiancée just had a newborn son a month and a half ago. I had to drive there. We don't live together. She's on subsidized housing. I can't be there because of my felony.

I also had to drive down to travelers aid to get a bus pass so that I could make it to school every day. I also go to job interviews. I just feel like having a license will change my life and give me the ability to be there for my family, be a better father, be a role model for my
children. That's it.

REPRESENTATIVE MARSICO: Thanks to our Chairman and thanks to everyone that was here today. As the Chair mentioned, this was very compelling information, and we'll take it from here.

We have a lot of work to do though on these bills. Conceptually, I think most of us agree with the concepts of the bills, but there needs to be some details worked out. Hopefully, we'll be able to move on those issues.

Once again, thanks to all the participants for being here. Thanks to the trades for allowing us to be here as well.

REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: I agree with my fellow chairs. I think this is a problem that's been going on for a very long time. I think, as was mentioned earlier, we all have district offices. We all represent 65 or so thousand people, and we hear it a lot. I think we want to help. And I think we will work together. I look forward to that. And I think we will have hopefully legislation and a solution sooner than later. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE JOZWIAK: Chairman Keller.
MR. KELLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As I had our first conversation with Steve, I thought this was going to be a very productive and informative public hearing, and it is and it was. And I think we need these because we have to find out what the problems are, how we can help make people's lives better.

Thanks to you and Chairman Marsico. I think we will be able to do that now because of this hearing. Thank you all for testifying.

REPRESENTATIVE JOZWIAK: Well, thanks to everybody. Going back to our Training Institute here in Pittsburgh, thank you for pulling us out of a situation there.

REPRESENTATIVE MARSICO: I also want to thank Representatives Cohen and Miller for their leadership on these bills. We appreciate the work you've done, and we'll continue to help advance the bills. Thanks.

REPRESENTATIVE JOZWIAK: With that, thank you very much. This hearing is adjourned.

(Hearing was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.)
CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the proceedings are contained fully and accurately in the notes taken by me on the within proceedings and that this is a correct transcript of the same.

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Ann Medis, RPR