

October 22, 2017

To Whom it may Concern,

This letter is in regard to my license suspension. Currently, I do not have a driver's license. I have had several suspensions in the past for irresponsible behavior and for non-payment of child support when I was unemployed. Those issues, and the ones for my current situation, stemmed from my disease of addiction. My most recent license suspension was in 2015 due a plea bargain for simple possession. My license is currently suspended until 2026.

I got clean in 2015, 2 ½ years ago. I have successfully completed rehabilitation, as well as finished my Allegheny County probation with no violations or dirty urines. I am currently a student pursuing a degree at CCAC to be a drug and alcohol counselor and plan to graduate in May 2018. I am also enrolled at Pittsburgh Community Services, where I will receive a diploma in social and human services. I am scheduled to graduate in December. That diploma will enable me to seek employment as a case manager, job specialist, peer facilitator, or counselor's assistant. It will be very difficult to secure employment without a driver's license. I also plan to continue my education, so without a license, that will severely limit the places I could work, and be able to get to school.

I had been employed until several weeks ago. I left that job because It was impossible for me to get to work in the morning, and then to school at night, and to my NA meetings. I couldn't get to them all on the same bus line. My sobriety and recovery is the piece that holds me together, and I could not forgo my meetings. Because I don't have a license, I gave up a job, that I need, to be able to get to meetings, and pursue my education, that will give me the opportunity for a higher paying job. I am currently seeking another job, but to find one in the area I need to be in is difficult. I have had to pass up several job offers because I was unable to get to the workplace on time because of the bus schedule.

My two youngest children are 14 and 16. Because of the bus schedules and my previous schedule, I had only been able to see them for a few hours a week. If I had a license, I would have a lot more time to spend with them. I want to be a good father, and want to be involved in their lives, but without a license it is impossible.

Riding the bus is not a safe for me. As previously mentioned, my past behaviors were fueled by my addiction. I was shot in 2014, because of poor choices and associations I was making. When I get on a bus, I never know who may be on that bus that may be a danger to me, and the other passengers on the bus. Also, I change buses numerous times a day. I am often, due to places where I have to change buses, in neighborhoods that are not healthy for my sobriety (people, places, things). A driver's license would allow me to avoid these neighborhoods that I should not be in.

All my fines and restoration fee has been paid, but I was denied a probationary license. Not having a license is a great hindrance and a major barrier to becoming a productive member of society. The suspensions for non-driving offenses make no sense. These suspensions set people up for failure.

Please support House Bills 163, 42, HR 76 and HB 1777.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chelsey Sirmons".

Chelsey Sirmons