



February 1, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

The Advocacy Subcommittee of the Allegheny County Jail Collaborative was formed in 2016 as a means for non-governmental community organizations and individuals – also signatories on this mission – to work collectively on the critical issues impeding the successful reentry of individuals who have paid their debts to society through incarceration. The Advocacy Subcommittee established driver's license reform as our priority through an initiative we named *Driven to Work* (DTW). As we focus on grassroots advocacy for legislation enabling returning citizens to rebuild their lives and care for their families, we respectfully request the support of The Judiciary and Transportation Committees for bills introduced by Rep. Saccone that seek to eliminate certain driver's license suspensions, namely HB 42, currently in the Judiciary Committee, HB 163 and Resolution #76, currently in the Transportation Committee.

We believe the current practice of driver's license suspensions is counter-productive. Best practices of license suspensions and The Bureau of Motor Vehicles indicate that these suspensions do nothing to change the behavior that the suspensions were issued for. Statistics from the BMV indicate that 75% of those with license suspensions continue to drive, and according to National Insurance statistics, 2.6 billion dollars are spent annually on accidents involving unlicensed and uninsured drivers.

Currently, Pennsylvania law requires that the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation suspend the licenses of individuals convicted of any offense involving the possession, sale, or delivery of controlled substances, regardless of whether the crime involved a vehicle. Since multiple suspensions must be served consecutively, individuals convicted of multiple non-driving related drug offenses can have their licenses suspended for years. In 2010, there were over 19,000 license suspensions in Pennsylvania for these non-driving related drug offenses. License suspensions create new legal, economic, and social barriers for reentrants, without improving the safety of our roads. These suspensions are a drain on our system and are a counter-productive waste of government time and resources. We need to repeal these laws.

Members of the Advocacy Subcommittee have extensive experience with and insight into the multiple ways ex-offenders, as well as their innocent children and families, are derailed by license suspensions. Many of the job opportunities available to individuals with a criminal record, such as construction or landscaping require the ability to move between multiple job sites, or involve working irregular hours when public transportation may be limited, or unavailable. Without a job they cannot pay restitution, court costs and supervision fees, support themselves and their families, or pay child support. Lack of a driver's license may also restrict the ability to access treatment, make mandatory appointments, or even go to the grocery store or pick their children up from school.

Passing these current bills is critical to establishing more effective policies. Thus, we request that you lend your support to the aforementioned bills and give men and women who want to get off public assistance, support themselves, strengthen their families, and fill the new jobs that are being created and those that will be left by retirement, the opportunity to do so.

In Unity,

DeWitt Walton

DeWitt Walton
Program Director