

TESTIMONY OF MIKE FONKERT
JUST CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR
KANSAS APPLESEED CENTER FOR LAW AND JUSTICE

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
NEUTRAL ON HB 2193
FEBRUARY 11, 2021

Members of the House Committee on Transportation:

My name is Mike Fonkert; I am the Just Campaign Manager for the Kansas Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to the belief that Kansans, working together, can build a state full of thriving, inclusive, and just communities.

Kansas Appleseed is neutral on HB 2193.

This bill aims to address the vicious cycle that traps so many Kansas driver's in a no-win situation. More than 213,000 Kansans have suspended driver's licenses.¹ In 2020, Kansas had the sixth highest suspension rate in the country.² Research indicates that nearly 75 percent of suspended drivers continue to drive, because they have no choice if they want to provide for their families.³ Driving a car is often necessary for important life tasks: like maintaining employment, buying groceries, or taking kids to doctor's appointments and school activities.⁴

This bill does not solve our state's driver's license suspension problem. While it does propose important steps by reducing the additional 90-day suspension extension for charges of driving on a revoked or suspended license to 30 days, removing the onerous application fees for applying for restricted driving privileges, and changing the additional reinstatement fee from \$100 per charge to \$100 per case while making the reinstatement fee only applicable to those eligible for reinstatement -- we know that much more must be done. For this bill to make a significant impact on this issue, it will need to be amended to include additional changes.

Fortunately, leaders from the Senate and House - along with law enforcement, judges, advocates, attorneys -- in cooperation with groups like the Justice Action Network, Americans for Prosperity, various Chambers of Commerce and more -- have been working together to find agreement on how to

¹ Pedraza, P. "KAKE NEWS INVESTIGATES: Avoiding a suspended license as numbers climb." KAKE News. 2019.
<http://www.kake.com/story/41224567/kake-news-investigates-avoiding-a-suspended-license-as-numbers-climb>

² Insurify Insights. "Put it in Park: States with the Most Suspended Licenses." 2021.
<https://insurify.com/insights/states-with-the-most-license-suspensions/>

³ American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators. "Best Practices Guide to Reducing Suspended Drivers." 2013. p.4
<https://www.aamva.org/Suspended-and-Revoked-Drivers-Working-Group/>

⁴ Gustitus, S. et al. "Access to Driving and License Suspension Policies for the Twenty-First Century Economy." 2008.
<http://research.policyarchive.org/20441.pdf>

safely make further changes. Together, a great deal of common ground has been identified as it relates to ensuring that individuals facing suspension have full access to payment plans that would allow them to avoid a suspension as long as they remain in good standing with their payment plan. This would be a big step forward towards making sure that being too poor to pay a large fine or fee all at once does lead to a driver's license suspension.

Please support strengthening this bill through adopting relevant amendments that limit the unnecessary burden of fines and fees. There is no empirical evidence which indicates that suspending a person's driving privilege for social non-conformance reasons is effective in gaining compliance.⁵ During the current pandemic, it is more important than ever that we help people out from onerous governmental burdens that impede their ability to access employment.

⁵ American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators. "Best Practices Guide to Reducing Suspended Drivers." 2013. p.4
<https://www.aamva.org/Suspended-and-Revoked-Drivers-Working-Group/>