

Testimony in Support of HB 2193

Chairman Proehl and Members of the House Transportation Committee:

This past month Douglas County, in partnership with the United Way of Douglas County, Lawrence Douglas County Health Department, the Lawrence Chamber, and a host of community human services agencies and advocates approved a strategic plan to reduce poverty in our community.

The goal of this plan is to *“foster an equitable Douglas County economy by implementing systems based solutions to reduce local poverty and discrimination and to expand access to opportunities so all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.”*

In order to achieve this goal, the community health plan has set a related objective to *“reduce the incarceration of Black and American/Indian Alaska Native residents.”* This objective directs our local criminal justice leaders to develop local strategies, administrative measures, and policies aimed at restoring access to driver’s licenses, which are more often than not directly associated with an individuals’ ability to comply with terms associated with a previous offenses, including but not limited to accessing housing, health care, food supporting and employment.

House Bill 2193 offers meaningful improvements to reinstating driver’s license for our justice-involved community members who are seeking opportunities to survive and thrive in our Kansas communities. The impact of this legislation on the length of suspension periods and the fees associated with reinstatement of a driver’s license represent a significant step toward our communities goals related to reducing poverty and supporting vulnerable populations. Douglas County and its human services partners support this bill and hope it will be favorably considered by the Kansas Legislature during the 2021 session.

Jill Jolicoeur, Assistant County Administrator, Douglas County, Kansas

Lea Roselyn, Community Impact Director, United Way of Douglas County

Caroline Grootes, Human Services Coalition