

February 21, 2019

House Committee on Judiciary
State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 2614 – Ending Debt-Based License Suspension

Chair Williamson and Representatives,

Children First for Oregon represents the interests of Oregon's 880,000 children and believes that together, with communities and leaders across the state, we can build a state where all children thrive.

Job stability is important for every individual, but it can be even more important for the child in the family. The sudden loss in access to transportation can cause the involuntary loss of a job. This effect is more pronounced in rural areas, due to lack of other transit options. When a parent loses their job, there is an underappreciated effect on the job holder's child.

Using data on tens of thousands of households over a decade, researchers discovered that there are adverse educational effects on the child.¹ According to the data, an involuntary job loss results in a 15% increase in the likelihood of a child repeating a grade. The effect increases for those parents with at most a high school education, but is minimal for parents who have completed at least some college. The study also notes that there is no evidence of significantly increased grade retention during the year of the job loss, indicating the educational effects on the child occur in the wake of the job loss.

To punish traffic violations, it makes no sense to force the offender to lose the means to pay the fine. The severity of the punishment not only means the defendant may not be able to pay the fine, but the academic effect on the child will create more societal costs down the road.

Children First for Oregon urges your support for HB 2614.

Sincerely,
James Barta
Strategic Director
Children First for Oregon

¹ Stevens, Ann Huff & Schaller, Jessamyn, 2011. "Short-run effects of parental job loss on children's academic achievement," *Economics of Education Review*, Elsevier, vol. 30(2), pages 289-299, April.

Together we can build an Oregon where all children thrive.