



Feb 5, 2020

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

## Oregon Food Bank Supports Ending Debt-Based Driver License Suspensions (HB 4065)

Chair Sanchez and members of the committee,

Oregon Food Bank believes that no one should be hungry and that hunger starves the human spirit. We provide food assistance to anyone who needs it through our network of regional food banks, pantries and emergency meal sites. In an average month, an estimated 260,000 people in Oregon and Clark County, Washington receive food from a pantry.

Oregon Food Bank's mission is to end hunger and its root causes. We know that access to affordable transportation is foundational in helping to ensure Oregonians have enough food on the table to feed their families. Transportation is a lifeline – it gets parents to their jobs, children to school, seniors to their medical appointments and everyone to the grocery store. **Policies that make it harder for our community members to access transportation make it harder for them to succeed and carry out the basics of daily living.** Debt-based licensed suspension is one such policy and needs to be eliminated.

This current policy disproportionately harms people experiencing poverty, the people Oregon Food Bank serves. Debt-based license suspensions expose people experiencing poverty to cascading consequences. Suspending driver licenses for inability to pay traps individuals in a cycle of poverty by removing their ability to get to and from their job, pursue new work opportunities or care for their family.

Debt-based license suspensions don't make our roads safer. But they do create impossible choices for people in poverty. When a person loses driving privileges, unemployment often follows. Many jobs require driving privileges, even if driving is not a part of the job. Individuals who are unable to pay are often forced to choose between losing their job—and their ability to pay back their debt—or continue driving.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We urge the legislature to join states including Idaho, Montana, California, and Mississippi in ending this unfair and counterproductive practice by passing HB 4065.

Sincerely,

Moira Bowman  
Director of Advocacy, Oregon Food Bank

