



February 20, 2020

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

Re: HB 4065 – Ending Debt-Based License Suspension

Children First works with our 120 partner organizations to develop the Children's Agenda. We identify and elevate legislative concepts that will support the needs of Oregon's children - our children - so that all of our children have opportunities to reach their full potential. **HB 4065 to end debt-based license suspension is part of the 2020 Children's Agenda.**

Job stability is important for every individual in a family, but it can be particularly important for the children. The sudden loss in access to use of a car, can lead to 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 children.

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.

More generally, without a license, people face impossible choices. Access to transportation is a necessary part of being able to live your life in Oregon, especially in rural areas. Many people

¹Stevens, 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.

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rely on driving to handle everyday tasks - going to school or work, transporting family members, seeing the doctor, and more. Suspending a person's driving privilege means taking away their ability to meet those obligations legally - often, without a readily available alternative.

Children need to live in economically secure families. A system that relies on debt-based driver license suspensions creates a vicious cycle of increasing debt, keeping people from being able to pay and undermining the stability of families.

Children First for Oregon urges your support for HB 4065.

Sincerely,

Chris Coughlin
Legislative Director

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