



March 8, 2021

House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil Law
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 2523 with the -1 Amendment

Chair Power, Vice-Chair Wallan, and members of the subcommittee,

The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon¹ supports HB 2523, which would build on HB 4210 (1st special session of 2020) and waive the fees for individuals to restore the driver's licenses after suspensions because of their inability to pay fines and fees.

Debt-based driver's license suspensions are a poverty penalty that punish people solely because they are poor. This is a two-tiered justice system, where rich and poor people with otherwise identical records receive different punishments solely because of their ability to pay court debt.

We supported HB 4210 in the 1st special session of 2020 and applaud the legislature discontinuing debt-based license suspensions. Without the addition of HB 2523, many community members currently impacted by debt-based suspensions continue to face the impossible choice between driving illegally (and risk incarceration and more fines) in order to get to work or meet personal/family needs, or choosing not to drive and losing needed income and access to education and other services.

Debt-based license suspensions disproportionately affect Black, Brown, people of color communities. Data recently released from the Racial Profiling bill (STOP data) revealed that the largest racial disparity exists in who is cited for driving while suspended, with Black people significantly more likely than their white counterparts to be stopped and ticketed for this violation. The Criminal Justice Commission stated that this was the downstream effect of fines and fees.

The ACLU of Oregon supported HB 4210 in the first special session and we urge the passage HB 2523 to waive reinstatement fees for those who had their licenses previously suspended because they were unable to pay fines and fees.

¹ The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon (ACLU of Oregon) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to preservation and enhancement of civil liberties and civil rights, with more than 28,000 members and supporters statewide.