



Claire Hall County Commissioner

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I am writing in support of HB 2614, to end debt-based driver license suspensions.

Currently in Oregon, if an individual gets a traffic ticket and is unable to pay it, their driver license can be suspended. Unlike a safety suspension that is usually for 1 year (like for a DUI), a license suspension for non-payment is for 20 years. What happens to our poorest citizens, who can't afford to pay? For Oregonians living in poverty, this can have cascading consequences that creates significant barriers to meeting their needs.

Poverty impacts Oregonians across our state. Over 500,000 people are living at or below the federal poverty line, including 15% of the children in our state. As a county commissioner, issues related to poverty, especially homelessness, hunger and health consume an increasing amount of time. While the growing economy has brought benefits to many, those who struggle at or near the poverty line continue to fall behind.

Access to transportation is a necessary part of being able to live your life in Oregon. Nearly three quarters of Oregonians 16 and older drive to work. Many of our counties don't have a public transit system that substitutes for having a car and taking away someone's ability to get to work, to the doctor, to the grocery store or get their kids to school is a severe consequence. In 28 of Oregon's 34 counties, more than half of the population does not live within a quarter mile of a stop operated by any transit agency. Suspending driver licenses for inability to pay traps individuals in a cycle of poverty and is counterproductive to the goal of getting someone to pay their traffic ticket.

I believe we have got to stop criminalizing being poor. One important step is to end debt-based driver license suspensions. That is why as a County Commissioner for Lincoln County I support HB 2614.

Claire Hall
Commissioner

