



February 19, 2020

Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee
Oregon State Legislature

RE: HB 4065 – Debt Based Drivers License Suspension

Dear Chair Prozanski and Committee Members:

Community Action Partnership's board of directors supports HB 4065. Community action agencies around Oregon work with individuals and families impacted by the loss of housing, income and other barriers to finding and maintain a safe and affordable place to call home. The loss of a license due to unpaid debt is an additional barrier that repeatedly comes up with the clients we serve.

Driver's license suspension should only be used in cases of public safety, not as a tool of debt collection. Debt will add to the barriers facing low-income and homeless Oregonians to obtain housing and jobs. Unexpected impacts on our clients may include:

- With the current affordable housing shortage, cars are often where people sleep and keep their belongings. This particularly impacts the less vulnerable and lower barrier clients more than the chronically homeless because they may be working and living in their cars.
- Community Action agencies may have to use funds to pay off debts in order to allow the client to obtain a job or housing. This can be costly and may reduce funding that could be used for other supportive services.
- Payment plans for low-no-income clients don't work. Even \$25-\$50/month is too much. Instead, they will push people into cycles of debt and poverty.
- In rural Oregon, license suspension causes further descent into poverty because there are no expansive alternatives in transportation.

Please consider these facts and the testimony you will hear from a representative of Oregon's community action network and vote to support HB 4065.

Thank you,

Janet Merrell

Janet Merrell
Executive Director