



February 24, 2020

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 4065**  
Ending Debt-Base Driver License Suspensions  
Submitted by Courtney Helstein on behalf of Family Forward Oregon

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee -

Family Forward Oregon focuses on strengthening the economic security of mothers and caregivers and that is why we strongly support House Bill 4065 as introduced. 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 create impossible choices for mothers and caregivers 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.

It is also well documented that Oregon has a history, along with most states in the US, of criminalizing economically marginalized people, through compounding fines, fees or other penalties. When poor women, who are often mothers, are unable to pay their rent or feed their kids they may delay paying fines for minor violations and can then find themselves accruing additional debt and spiraling into a greater financial crisis.

Furthermore, debt related suspensions do not affect Oregonians equally. Because Black and Latinx people are disproportionately stopped, ticketed, charged and convicted, this cycle of debt and punishment especially burdens communities of color.

We are aware of recent efforts to amend HB 4065, but we respectfully request that this committee move the bill to the Senate floor unamended. This bill is the result of years of work and would result in real positive change for mothers and caregivers, and other impacted Oregonians, trapped in cycles of poverty because they are unable to pay fines and fees. **Family Forward Oregon urges your support for HB 4065 unamended.**