



## AFSCME Supports HB 4210

June 23, 2020

Dear Co-Chairs Courtney and Kotek, Vice-Chairs Girod and Drazen and members of the committee

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 4210 to end the practice of suspending driver licenses due to unpaid traffic fines for otherwise safe drivers. Oregon AFSCME Council 75 represents nearly 27,000 employees in both the private and public sectors. Our members range in income level and many work with people who are financially or otherwise vulnerable and seeking public services.

Many others have provided details and statistics on why passage of this bill is important. When we criminalize poverty we not only perpetuate systemic racism, we not only cause undue stress and trauma to individuals and families we also needless cause unnecessary strains on our public services. AFSCME members know the real impacts on people but also know that their ability to help people is constrained by the lack of resources to get people the supports they need.

Ending the practice of suspending driver licenses due to an inability to pay a fine is even more crucial at this point in time. The COVID pandemic has increased the need to rely on a car for our lower income family members, friends and neighbors either to pick up gig work to help make ends meet because of a lost job, or to reduce risk of exposure from riding on public transit.

This is a simple step that helps people who are otherwise safe drivers keep their licenses and maintain employment or safe transportation for themselves or loved ones. It is one of many steps that we should be included in our conversations on what laws to pass to help end systemic racism and criminalization of poverty.

Please pass this important policy to remove one more hurdle too many poor people have been unnecessarily punished by.

Sincerely,

Eva Rippeteau  
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