



# AMERICANS for TAX REFORM

April 20, 2021

United States House of Representatives  
Committee on the Judiciary  
2138 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives:

I am writing today to urge your **support of the bipartisan Bill H.R.2453 the Driving for Opportunity Act of 2021.**<sup>1</sup> This legislation would help reduce debt-based driver license suspensions.

In the United States, 35 States and the District of Columbia currently have laws where if an individual is unable to pay the fees and fines imposed by a court, their driver's license is suspended.<sup>2</sup> This occurs irrespective to whether the offense had anything to do with driving. **It is simply a punishment for being poor.**

Access to a vehicle is an access to opportunity. Millions of Americans use their vehicles to access employment, education, and healthcare. Data shows that 76% of Americans workers commute solo to work.<sup>3</sup>

Suspending a driver's license for no other reason than being unable to pay a court fine is counterintuitive. If an individual is unable to work because they can no longer use reliable transportation, how can they be expected to generate the income necessary to pay these fees and fines?

**Withholding an American's driver's license to force payment of fines and fees is combination of debtor's prison and house arrest.**

This legislation would also improve public safety. By reducing the amount of time police have to spend acting as tax collectors,<sup>4</sup> thousands of hours can go towards a better use of time than enforcing these unnecessary suspensions.<sup>5</sup> Further, the legislation **does not prevent the suspension of an individual's license on the basis of road safety** – such as accumulating too many strikes or driving while under the influence.

The legislation does not require state to make this change, but simply encourages them to pursue a better policy.

We urge Congress to quickly enact the Driving for Opportunity Act to encourage removal of a counterproductive policy to the benefit of millions of Americans. If you have any questions, please do hesitate to contact me or Americans for Tax Reform Director of Federal Policy, Katie McAuliffe (kmauliffe@atr.org).

Sincerely,

Grover Norquist  
President,  
Americans for Tax Reform

<sup>1</sup> Available at: <https://www.congress.gov/bills/117/congress/117th-congress/house-bill/2453/>

<sup>2</sup> See: "Free to Drive: National Campaign to End Debt-Based License Suspensions," *Fines & Fees Justice Center*, (Jun. 25, 2019), <https://finesandfeesjusticecenter.org/campaigns/national-drivers-license-suspension-campaign-free-to-drive/>

<sup>3</sup> Tomer, Adie, "American's Commuting Choice: 5 major takeaways from 2017," *Brookings Institute*, (Oct. 3, 2017) <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2017/10/03/americans-commuting-choices-5-major-takeaways-from-2016-census-data/amp/>

<sup>4</sup> Norquist, G. Grover, "Commentary: Policing for Profit Must End," *Chicago Tribune*, (Jun. 16, 2020). <https://www.chicagotribune.com/opinion/commentary/ct-opinion-police-reform-fees-fines-grover-norquist-20200616-6c36a902vffudpxe2p5gftfuky-story.html>

<sup>5</sup> See: "Sens. Coons, Wicker, reintroduce bipartisan bill targeting debt-based driver's license suspensions," *Senator Chris Coons*, (Mar. 25, 2021), <https://www.coons.senate.gov/news/press-releases/sens-coons-wicker-reintroduce-bipartisan-bill-targeting-debt-based-drivers-license-suspensions>

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