

Driving Opportunities: BETTER CHILD WELL-BEING



Ending driver's license suspension for unpaid traffic tickets and missed court dates in North Carolina is a common-sense reform that cannot wait.

The Opportunity

Nearly 1 million North Carolinians have a suspended driver's license, not because they are unsafe drivers, but because they cannot afford to pay traffic fines and fees or missed a court date. In a rural state such as North Carolina, a driver's license is key for mobility and opportunity. Ending unnecessary license suspensions will have benefits that extend far beyond the individual driver to their children and families.

Why It Matters

Driver's Licenses are Beneficial to Child Wellbeing

- ▶ When parents can reliably drive, children are more likely to attend school consistently, get to medical appointments, and participate in enriching extracurricular activities, supporting healthy development and a strong sense of belonging.
- ▶ Stable transportation helps parents maintain steady employment, supporting family income and strengthening children's access to nutritious food, secure housing, and quality childcare, all of which promote their wellbeing.
- ▶ Children, whose parents continue driving out of necessity, are at risk of being exposed to traumatic law-enforcement interactions if their parents are pulled over or arrested.

Driver's License Improves Parents' Ability to Care for their Children

- ▶ When parents have reliable transportation, they can more easily participate in pickup and drop-off for visitation, helping maintain strong, consistent parent-child relationships, even in separated or divorced families.
- ▶ Ensuring parents can transport their children safely and dependably supports stable custody arrangements and helps families stay connected and supported.

The Evidence-Based Reforms

North Carolina must act to improve opportunity and improve rates of payment and court appearance.

- ▣ End driver's license suspensions for unpaid traffic debt and missed court dates; and
- ▣ Replace with evidence-based practices such as court reminders, ability-to-pay assessments, and reasonable payment plans.

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