

# Driving Opportunities: STRONGER BUSINESSES AND A BETTER ECONOMY



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, like North Carolina, a driver's license is key for mobility and opportunity. Ending unnecessary license suspensions will expand the workforce, strengthen employer hiring pipelines, boost economic growth, reduce reliance on public assistance, and preserve billions in earned income.

## Why It Matters

### Driver's Licenses are Good for Business

- ▶ When more North Carolinians can maintain active driver's licenses, employers benefit from larger, more reliable talent pipelines, making it easier to find and retain qualified workers.
- ▶ A broader candidate pool, supported by reliable transportation or driver's licenses, strengthens the labor market, boosts productivity, and contributes to economic growth across the state.

### Driver's Licenses Strengthen the Economy

- ▶ Meaningful employment helps improve the economy by reducing public spending associated with cycles of re-incarceration, decreasing the number of people who rely on taxpayer-funded assistance programs such as public benefits initiatives, shelters, and social services to obtain food, housing, and other needed resources, and leading to more people being employed and paying income taxes into the economy.
- ▶ North Carolina can boost earnings by an estimated \$6.5 to \$8.8 billion by ensuring people are able to keep their driver's licenses and stay connected to work.
- ▶ Access to driver's licenses creates the potential for North Carolina to unlock more than \$680 million in additional economic activity.

## 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.

For more information, contact **Laura Webb**, [laura@ncjustice.org](mailto:laura@ncjustice.org)