

# Driving Opportunities: SUCCESSFUL REENTRY



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. Driver's license suspension is one of the most significant, and often overlooked, barriers to successful reentry in North Carolina. Ending unnecessary license suspensions will bolster successful reentry.

## Why It Matters

### Driver's Licenses Bolster Successful Reentry

- ▶ Meaningful employment reduces the likelihood of recidivism. A suspended driver's license negatively impacts a person's ability to get and keep meaningful employment.
- ▶ Suspended licenses make it difficult – or impossible – for returning residents to attend court dates, probation meetings, treatment programs, or other legal obligations. Missing these obligations can result in further penalties or incarceration.
- ▶ In one study, it was discovered that for individuals living in rural communities, the lack of transportation was the largest barrier to abiding by parole or probation guidelines.
- ▶ Driving on a suspended license, often out of necessity, can lead to other criminal charges, such as driving while license revoked, without license, or with expired registration.

## 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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