



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## VICTORY! ILLINOIS LEGISLATURE VOTES TO END INEQUITABLE LICENSE SUSPENSIONS BY PASSING THE “LICENSE TO WORK ACT”

SPRINGFIELD-- After three years of advocacy, SB 1786, the License to Work Act, has passed out of the Illinois Legislature with a vote of 88-27 in the House, and now awaits Governor JB Pritzker’s signature. The bill ends the practice of suspending driver’s licenses for numerous non-driving violations such as the inability to pay parking and compliance tickets, fines and fees.

“Thank you, Illinois, for letting us get back to work,” **said Rosazlia Grillier of Community Organizing and Family Issues, who knows personally what it is like to have her driver’s license suspended in Illinois.**

This victory is due to a hard-fought campaign, led by a dedicated coalition of community leaders and impacted individuals throughout Illinois who were determined to stand up for their communities. Community advocates hailed from throughout the state, and across the ideological spectrum, including the ACLU of Illinois, the Chicago Urban League, the Chicago Jobs Council, Community Organizing and Family Issues, Illinois Policy Institute, Americans for Prosperity—Illinois, Heartland Alliance, Woodstock Institute, and more.

The License to Work Act was championed by State Senator Omar Aquino (D-Chicago), State Representative Carol Ammons (D-Champaign), and supported by State Representative Tom Demmer (R-Dixon), Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, and many others.

“We are so grateful for the bi-partisan support that got this bill across the finish line and we are even more grateful for the community support from advocates across Illinois that made this bill a reality,” **said Transit Table leader Eric Halvorson of the Chicago Jobs Council,** “We estimate that 400 people lose their jobs each week due to non-driving license suspensions and that suspension creates a ripple effect that upends thousands of lives. We are elated that Illinois has listened to communities and passed a bill that will bring relief to thousands.”

This bill reforms a major inequitable piece of the State's fines and fees system. Its passage is essential in combating the high rate of bankruptcies caused by aggressive and racially disproportionate municipal ticketing and collections processes.

"Suspending driver's licenses for failure to pay parking tickets was never a good idea. Without a driver's license, many folks cannot get or keep a job, pushing them into a deeper cycle of debt and making it more difficult for them to feed their families, much less pay their tickets," **said Brent Adams of Woodstock Institute**. "Like so many ill-conceived penalties, this one harmed low-income folks and people of color the most, so we are thrilled with the passage of this critical legislation."

Some of the state's most egregious vehicle ticketing practices hailed from the City of Chicago, which had formerly opposed the License to Work Act until this session. Chicago's Mayor Lori Lightfoot changed the City's tune, and sought to tackle the Chicago's regressive vehicle ticketing practices following a collaborative report on the City's fines and fees practices led by Chicago Clerk Anna Valencia. The passage of the License to Work Act makes it impossible for any municipality, like Chicago, to resort to the punitive practice of taking away the license of a good driver who cannot afford to pay off non-driving related tickets, fines, and fees.

"At Heartland Alliance, we know that economic opportunity is essential to well-being," **said Heartland Alliance's Director of Legislative Advocacy, Kim Drew**. "Through the License to Work Act, we will see thousands of people be able to keep their licenses and in turn, their jobs, their ability to care for themselves and their families, and bring Illinois a step closer to becoming a more equitable state."

Pending the Governor's signature, the act will be effective on July 2020. Advocates celebrate this win and look forward to partnering with government, non-profit and community leaders to spread the news of this bill and ensure that all Illinoisans, who are eligible, are able to get their licenses back, get back on the road, and can start to build a future filled with financial opportunity.

**The Transit Table is a coalition of Illinois social service providers, advocates, and other stakeholders working to eliminate transportation barriers that keep people out of work and in poverty. Among the Transit Table members are:**

ACLU of Illinois  
Americans for Prosperity– Illinois  
Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice  
Chicago Jobs Council  
Chicago Urban League  
Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI)  
Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights  
Revolution Workshop  
Woodstock Institute

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