



January 27, 2020

RE: SB275

Chairman Peterson, and Honorable Member of this Committee,

I would like to begin my testimony by personally thanking Chairman Peterson for scheduling this hearing on this bill and for the ongoing dialogue that he and several others that we have communicated with since we had a hearing on this bill last year. Afterwards, Sen. Peterson advised me to “shore this bill up and bring it back when it was ready for prime time” which I believe we have done with the help of Sen. Peterson and others who are here today in support of this bill that my colleague and friend Melissa Lubber did a great job of outlining possible amendments in this regard that I understand Senator Faust-Goudeau had with Senator Braun and Ed Klumpp from the Kansas Sheriff’s Association.

Back in 2014, I presented testimony in what was then Senate Bill 393. I estimated there to be between 60 and 120,000 Kansas with suspended drivers licenses which was largely a large estimate to illustrating that it was far beyond those in the criminal justice system as some had perceived. This past fall Pilar Pedraza from KAKE TV in Wichita did three stories relating to the need to pass this legislation because of the negative impact it was having on our community. She compiled evidence that there were as many as 213,000 Kansas currently with suspended driver’s licenses. She had several stories of individuals who had been doing whatever they could to provide for their families having to help them accommodate their need to get to work and do other activities related to helping their family survive without a driver’s license because their fines had become so exorbitant there was no way they could pay these off in one lump sum which our current statutes for the most part require them to do.

I have too many stories to even begin to relate about people from all walks of life in my behavioral health practice in Wichita Kansas, but one that really stood out recently was an employer who owned a construction company telling me that there were more people with suspended driver’s licenses in the labor pool he was considering for employment opportunities that there were with valid driver’s license. I often have conversation with those who have family members who have suspended driver’s licenses’ relate the burden it places on their entire family, which is why I am fully in favor of having reinstatement fees for anybody that wants the privilege of being able to have driver’s license in these cases. I believe that anybody that is serious and will follow through on their payments will be able to find the funds or a family member who would help them out in this regard considering the burden they likely have been on them for too many years. I believe most of them would agree that this should be prioritized before rent and food because this is essential for them to provide rent and food. This should be on their number one priority at the beginning of every month and I’m very big on the accountability factor in this regard. The requirement of them providing insurance will provide another great measure of accountable so that

those who are involved in accidents with uninsured drivers don't have to shoulder the liability along with state legal fees having an accident with someone who has a suspended license and no insurance.

I was again reminded of how widespread this issue was when after attending a criminal justice reform conference in Kansas City in October of last year. This was attended by many government officials from both Kansas and Missouri as well as legislators and policy advocates from across the county that included Mark Holden, a legislative advocate for criminal justice reform with Koch Industries whom I've had the pleasure of acquaintance with his past work in Wichita prior to him relocating his efforts to Washington D.C. While talking to him there were several people behind me that I assumed were in line to talk to him, but to my surprise they were in line to talk to me. Two of them were from the Kansas Chamber of Commerce and two others were from the Johnson County District Attorney's Office and they wanted to talk to me about my commitment to bring this legislation to fruition in the coming year when we were asked to publicly commit to something we could do to better our communities and served criminal justice reform efforts in the coming year.

A couple members of the Kansas City Chamber of Commerce stated this had become a huge issue for them because of the huge impact they felt it was having on the labor force and state revenue, not to mention municipalities not getting revenues they will get with passage of this bill. The gentlemen from the Johnson County District Attorney's Office shared with me the huge impact it was have clogging up the courts in their jurisdiction. I believe that is reflected across the state and in Sedgwick County from my related interactions with Sheriff Easter, police chief Gordon Ramsay and Mark Bennett from the Sedgwick County District Attorney's Office in Wichita. I am beyond appreciative that Ed Klumpp is here on their behalf to represent their support or any concerns they may have because I want us all to work together to figure out how we can get these folks out back in the labor pool and out of the courts. I have heard may be as many as 5% of Kansans who have suspended driver's licenses with very high rates in rural areas as well. With the passage of this bill with the proposed amendments these folks will become much more productive members of our society as well as provide for their families in the process.

I cannot tell all of you how much I appreciate this hearing and the opportunity that you have presented us in your consideration of passing SB275 with the amendments that Melissa Lubbers has just proposed to you that I understand that Sen. Faust-Goudeau has discussed with Ed Klumpp and some of the members of this respectful committee. I stand for questions, if there are any for me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter J. Ninemire". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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