

Kenneth J. Hopkins
Mayor



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Chair Carol McEntee and Members
House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island General Assembly

RE: Opposition to House Bill 7558 – An Act Relating to Motor and Other Vehicles

Dear Chair McEntee and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to express my formal **opposition** to **House Bill 7558**, which seeks to repeal Section 31-11-25 of the General Laws. While I understand the intent may be to reduce the burden on certain drivers, I believe that the complete repeal of the state's ability to suspend licenses for failure to pay court-imposed fines undermines the rule of law and the efficacy of our judicial system.

The repeal of this section removes a critical tool used to ensure compliance with Rhode Island's motor vehicle laws. My concerns are centered on the following points:

- **Loss of Accountability:** Currently, the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is required to suspend the license of an individual who fails to pay fines or costs associated with motor vehicle violations. Repealing this would remove a primary incentive for individuals to resolve their legal obligations to the state.
- The current law already provides sufficient protections, including an 'ability to pay' hearing, which reassures the public that those facing hardship are fairly treated without undermining enforcement.
- Maintaining license suspension preserves the court's authority to enforce payment plans, which is essential for the effective functioning of our judicial system and ensuring compliance.

Section 31-11-25 is essential for ensuring traffic violation penalties are enforced effectively; its removal could lead to decreased fine collections and undermine court authority.

+2

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to provide an **unfavorable recommendation** for H 7558.

Respectfully submitted,

Colonel Michael J. Winquist
Chief of Police
Cranston Police Department