HB 2434 is a bill introduced in the Kansas Legislature on January 13, 2020. The bill says that a person’s driver’s license cannot be suspended due to nonpayment of fines or court costs associated with a traffic citation. The bill also says that this applies retroactively to anyone whose license is currently suspended because of nonpayment of fees or court costs associated with a traffic citation. Language in K.S.A. 2019 Supp. 8-2106, 8-2110, and 82110b is cleaned up to be consistent with this new provision.
WHY HB 2434 IS IMPORTANT

DRIVER’S LICENSE SUSPENSIONS PREVENT EMPLOYMENT
Many professions directly require people to drive and have valid driver’s licenses. Even for jobs that do not directly require driver’s licenses, lack of public transportation limits job accessibility. In a New Jersey study, 42% of drivers lost their jobs once driving privileges were suspended, and nearly half could not find new employment. People who are able to legally drive are much more likely to have stable employment.

SUSPENSIONS HARM COMMUNITIES
Stress placed on families and communities as a result of suspensions result in unemployment, underemployment, lower wages, fewer employment opportunities, fewer hiring choices for employers, decreased productivity in communities, and increased insurance costs. Suspensions disproportionately harm communities of color: Suspension rates in communities with the highest percent of people of color are two and a half times greater than in communities with the smallest percent of people of color.

SUSPENSIONS ARE NOT EFFECTIVE AS A COLLECTION OR LAW ENFORCEMENT TOOL
“The common belief that a driver license suspension provides effective, sustainable motivation to encourage individuals to comply with court ordered or legislated mandates to avoid suspension is not supported by empirical evidence.” Reducing debt to an amount people can afford is much more effective at ensuring compliance.

SUSPENSIONS REDUCE PUBLIC SAFETY
States waste an average of nine hours of Police and Court time for every suspended license case. Research indicates approximately 75% of all suspended drivers continue to drive. Police departments in cities that impose more fees and fines “solve violent crimes at significantly lower rates.” It is common for municipal prosecutors in states that impose driver’s license suspensions for unpaid fees and fines to spend 30% of their caseload on license suspension cases.

14. Id.