



KANSAS APPLESEED POLICY PRIORITIES: GET KANSANS BACK TO WORK.

127,116

KANSAS DRIVER'S LICENSES
SUSPENDED DUE TO UNPAID
FEES AND FINES ¹

6th

KANSAS HAD THE SIXTH
HIGHEST SUSPENSION RATE
IN THE COUNTRY ²

84%

OF SUSPENSIONS IN KANSAS
ARE DUE TO UNPAID FINES,
FEES OR COURT COSTS ³

HOW STATE LAWMAKERS CAN FIX THE PROBLEM

Since 2017, 25 states and Washington, D.C. have passed reforms to end or significantly limit debt-related driving restrictions. States like Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, Idaho, Utah, West Virginia, and Kentucky have taken legislative action to end the use of debt-based driver's license suspensions.⁴ Ending this practice means a driver's license cannot be suspended simply due to nonpayment of fines or court costs associated with a traffic citation. States that have made this change have not seen drop-offs in collections but rather have seen payments continue at historical rates and have even realized increased collections when coupling this reform with other debt-relief options.⁵

DRIVER'S LICENSE SUSPENSIONS HURT THE ECONOMY

There is no doubt that this issue negatively impacts the Kansas economy. Even estimating conservatively, debt-based driver's license suspensions alone cost the state of Kansas over \$1 billion in annual earnings lost, and that does not include calculations for the far-reaching economic impact of those earnings.⁶

People who can drive legally are much more likely to have stable employment. Many professions directly require people to drive and have valid driver's licenses – think about how many places are currently hiring truck drivers or bus drivers. Even for jobs that do not directly require driver's licenses, the 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.⁷ In Arizona, a study revealed that 72% of suspended drivers suffered earnings loss from job loss or hours reductions.⁸



SUSPENSIONS ARE COMPLETELY INEFFECTIVE AS A COLLECTION OR LAW ENFORCEMENT TOOL

Research clearly shows that there is no real evidence that the threat of a driver's license suspension or the imposition of a suspension is an effective mechanism to coerce any form of social compliance. It is widely believed that this method is a tool for law enforcement, but the evidence shows that it is a flawed tool that fails to achieve its intended task.⁹

“The common belief that a driver's 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.”¹⁰ Reducing debt to an amount people can afford is much more effective at ensuring compliance.

In one study, an average of nine hours of police and court time was spent for every suspended license case.¹¹ Research indicates that a large majority of suspended drivers are eventually placed in a situation where they feel they have to drive despite their suspension.¹² This results in more uninsured drivers and automobiles being on Kansas roads. Police departments in cities that impose more fees and fines “solve violent crimes at significantly lower rates.”¹³ In one instance, a municipal prosecutor in a state that imposes driver's license suspensions for unpaid fees and fines reported their office spends 30% of their caseload on license suspension cases.¹⁴

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