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Date: Tuesday, August 9, 2022 8:14:49 AM

From: Lianna Kressin [mailto:lianna@povertyaction.org]
Sent: Monday, August 8, 2022 5:00 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Comment on Infraction Rules for Courts of Limited Jurisdiction

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Public Comment on Infraction Rules for Courts of Limited Jurisdiction

Senate Bill 5226 makes an important first step to make sure that people are not losing their license because of an inability to pay for a traffic infraction. However, the gaps left by this legislation require addressing. It is imperative that drivers understand their rights, and that the courts have a clear process to give drivers notice of those rights.

In my work, I advocate for people living on low incomes and try to advance policy solutions that will alleviate poverty. Allowing people to stay licensed allows them to stay insured and continue getting to work and taking care of family is important. People should not be penalized for their low incomes – especially when that means potentially losing a license. As we know, people who cannot pay a traffic ticket are no less safe than other drivers who get traffic tickets and can pay for them.

Furthermore, our legal system was built on the oppression of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, and a lot of work remains to be done to achieve equity in our state. As BIPOC are disparately cited for traffic infractions and disparately economically marginalized, this topic is an issue of race equity. To make the new legislation apply equitably, courts should have guidance about how to decide if a person cannot pay a traffic ticket and what is a realistic payment plan.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lianna Kressin, MSW | Basic Needs Campaign Lead

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