



**Testimony to House Committee on Transportation
Supporting HB 2193
February 11, 2021
The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce**

The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce (KC Chamber) urges the House Committee on Transportation to favorably pass HB 2193 to reduce barriers for individuals to reclaim legal driving status. The KC Chamber, representing nearly 2,000 businesses (40% of which in Kansas), and its Board of Directors has identified workforce development and increasing employment opportunities for justice-involved individuals as a top priority. The greater Kansas City region currently has over 69,000 open jobs and the KC Chamber encourages multiple strategies to break down barriers for people entering the workforce. By streamlining the process for individuals to obtain valid driving status in the state, HB 2193 will remove some barriers for individuals, especially returning citizens from our correctional institutions, to regain some level of driving status.

According to Kansas Applesseed, over 137,000 driver's licenses in Kansas are suspended due to unpaid fees and fines as of June 2019 and Kansas, as of 2018, had the fifth highest suspension rate in the country. With limited public transportation in the Kansas City region and across the state, a driver's license is critical to gaining employment. The KC Chamber believes we should work to grow the available talent pool from which employers can hire. Furthermore, suspended driver's licenses can begin a cycle of incarceration, joblessness and poverty.

The KC Chamber believes that by removing this barrier for returning citizens and justice-involved individuals, Kansas can get more people back into the workforce while making our communities stronger and safer. The Chamber believes that meaningful employment is a critical tool to reduce recidivism and reoffending and stands behind efforts to reduce the cycle of crime and poverty that unfortunately entraps many in our communities. The KC Chamber and its Board of Directors encourage this committee to pass HB 2193 with a favorable recommendation.

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