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(Columbus, OH)—**The following statement is attributed to the businesses and organizations listed below in response to the unanimous passage of Substitute Senate Bill 37 out of the Ohio Senate today:**

"In Ohio, one million drivers currently have suspended driver's licenses. Approximately 60 percent of all driver's license suspensions are based on a person's failure to pay money owed to a court, the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV), a private third party, or failure to appear in court. Today's passage of Substitute Senate Bill 37 goes a long way toward ensuring that a person's ability to pay a fine or fee should not determine whether they are free to drive.

Substitute Senate Bill 37 removes some of the financial barriers that lead to driver's license suspensions in Ohio. With the passage of this legislation, Ohio would join more than 20 other states that have already moved away from these debt-related penalties.

When a state's public policy acts as a barrier to a person reaching their full potential, the long-term consequences impact individuals, families, and their communities at large. A valid driver's license is essential to participating in Ohio's economy and earning the money necessary to resolve existing debt.

Transportation obstacles have long been a significant factor in unemployment. With studies showing that eighty-six percent of Americans drive to work in their own vehicles, losing the ability to drive legally negatively impacts Ohio's workforce. Those who choose to drive to work illegally are subsequently penalized further as they compile new suspensions for driving without a license. They fall deeper in debt as the fees pile on, and Ohio businesses lose employees.

We thank Substitute Senate Bill 37's co-sponsors, Senator Louis Blessing III and Senator Catherine Ingram, as well as Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Nathan Manning for their continued dedication to eliminating debt-related driver's license suspensions. Throughout the committee process, Senators heard from 33 proponent witnesses ranging from legal aid societies to employment advocates to local government representatives to conservative groups. They all saw the benefit of passing Senate Bill 37.

We look forward to working closely with the members of the Ohio House of Representatives as they take Substitute Senate Bill 37 under consideration and work toward putting Ohioans back in the driver's seat and on track to a more productive future."

Signed:

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