

DRIVING SUCCESS



Today, almost 2 million Floridians have a suspended driver's license, not because they are dangerous drivers, but because they are poor.

Suspending driver's licenses for unpaid fines and fees in Florida is counterproductive and needs to end.

Driver's license suspensions for nonpayment are counterproductive and costly.

- Almost 90% of Floridians drive to work.¹ When people lose their licenses, they often lose their jobs, making it more difficult to pay for court debt.
- In Florida, 72% of driver's license suspensions are for unpaid fines and fees, while less than 5% of suspensions are for dangerous driving or public safety reasons.²
- There is no evidence confirming suspending driver's licenses increase collections.³

Driver's license suspensions hurt businesses and families, cost taxpayers money, and weaken the state's economy.

- Employers suffer because workers who lose their licenses can't reliably get to work. Studies have found that half of the people whose driver's licenses were suspended also lost their job.⁴
- Without a license, people who can't legally drive can't get to work, a medical appointment, church, or the grocery store without risking additional charges for driving while their license is suspended.

Driver's license suspensions undermine public safety.

- Dangerous driving or serious public safety concerns should be the only reasons to restrict someone's driving.
- When police and prosecutors spend time arresting and prosecuting people for driving on a suspended license, they aren't fighting serious crime.

Across the country, driver's license suspension laws are changing.

- The James Madison Institute estimates Florida taxpayers would save \$9.2 million annually if the state stopped suspending licenses for unpaid fines and fees.⁵
- Texas became the most recent state to pass license suspension reform for unpaid fines and fees. Virginia, Mississippi, Montana, and other states have also changed their laws.⁶
- To accelerate reform nationwide, more than 100 ideologically diverse organizations joined forces in September 2019 to launch the Free to Drive campaign. Visit freetodrive.org to stay up-to-date on what other states, including Florida, are doing to stop driver's license suspensions for unpaid fines and fees.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau (2018). American Community Survey 1-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Florida <http://censusreporter.org/profiles/04000US12-florida/>

² Whitelemons, Carson, Ashley Thomas, and Sarah Couture. Driving on Empty: Florida's Counterproductive and Costly Driver's License Suspension Practices. Fines and Fees Justice Center (2019). <https://finesandfeesjusticecenter.org/>

³ Whitelemons, Carson, Ashley Thomas, and Sarah Couture. Driving on Empty: Florida's Counterproductive and Costly Driver's License Suspension Practices. Fines and Fees Justice Center (2019). <https://finesandfeesjusticecenter.org/>

⁴ 30 Percent of Civilian Jobs Require Some Driving in 2016. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 27 June 2017, www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2017/30-percent-of-civilian-jobs-require-some-driving-in-2016.htm

⁵ Craven, James, and Sal Nuzzo. Changing Course: Driver's License Suspension in Florida. James Madison Institute, Reason Foundation, Nov. 2018, www.jamesmadison.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Backgrounder_DriverLicense_9.12.18_v02-1.pdf

⁶ Fines and Fees Justice Center (2019). Existing Laws for Failure to Pay. Retrieved from Maps: State Laws, www.freetodrive.org

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