



Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Transportation
In support of H.3039-S.1812, An Act relative to motor vehicle license suspension
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July 23, 2015

Since 1974 the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA) has held strong positions in support of alternative sanctions and sentences for people convicted of nonviolent crimes, recognizing that purely punitive sanctions and sentences can jeopardize rehabilitation and reintegration. In 2012 the League of Women Voters of the United States adopted its position on sentencing, which includes taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime.

In addition, since 1984 LWVMA has supported measures to protect the civil and individual rights of an offender.

Current law mandates that people convicted of any drug offense have their driver's license suspended for up to 5 years and then must pay a fine to apply for reinstatement. A drug offense related to possession, use or sale is unrelated to a person's driving ability and record, provided the person was not convicted of driving while operating under the influence (OUI). In fact, current law makes the punishment for a first drug offense more severe than for an OUI first offense.

Further, via the license suspension, a back-door CORI check is available to anyone who can check driving records, because the suspension remains on the records indefinitely. Without a driver's license and a clean CORI, it is extremely difficult to obtain employment. Thus, the current law makes it much more difficult for someone convicted on even a minor drug offense to become a productive member of the workforce and society.

This bill repeals the mandatory license suspension and mandates expunging the suspension from the driving records for those previously convicted.

This bill is one of many before the legislature this session that seeks to reduce the adverse, long-term effects of minor drug offenses and reform our criminal justice system to encourage people to become and remain productive members of society, most of which are being reviewed in the Judiciary Committee.

The League of Women Voters notes that this committee passed a similar bill favorably out of committee last session, and is extremely disappointed that it was subsequently sent to study. We look forward to this bill actually becoming law in this session as part of a comprehensive reform of our laws related to minor drug and other offenses.

Thank you for your consideration.