



SUPPORT FOR HB 2496 – Authorizing court services officers and community corrections officers to provide a certification of identification to offenders.

Testimony of Austin Spillar

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CORRECTIONS & JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMITTEE – Feb. 11. 2020

Chairman Jennings and Members of this Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today. My name is Austin Spillar. I am the Policy Associate of the ACLU of Kansas. We are a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that works to preserve and strengthen the constitutional liberties of every person in Kansas. The ACLU of Kansas supports HB 2496 as a positive step towards giving Kansans on probation the tools and resources necessary for success.

The impact of HB 2496 could be far reaching. Between Court Services and Community Corrections, Kansas has over 11,000 people on felony probation.¹ By authorizing the provision of a certificate of identification to people on probation, HB 2496 removes a barrier to success for these individuals, many of whom need a driver's license to be able to comply with the conditions of their probation.

People on probation need to be able to drive legally to their check-ins with their probation officer. They need a driver's license to get to work and school, and to participate in court mandated treatment programs and community service. If probationers fail to meet these obligations, they can have probation revoked and be sent to prison. Unfortunately, people on probation are driving without licenses because they have no other choice, and each time they do so they risk a conviction of a new crime that can send them back to prison. HB 2496 would help to eliminate this problem.

The transportation factor is particularly acute in Kansas. In course of conducting research for an upcoming report on probation in the state, the ACLU of Kansas found that probation officers and people on probation agree that a lack of transportation remains a huge barrier for people on probation. Kansas has limited public transportation options, especially in rural areas. Even heavily populated and urban places such as Wichita have unreliable public transit, long wait times, and limited routes. This requires Kansans to rely heavily on personal vehicles, thereby requiring a valid driver's license.

Ensuring that individuals on probation are able to obtain driver's licenses through a collaboration between the community corrections, court services, and the DMV is an inexpensive method to help reduce recidivism and remove barriers to successful re-entry and rehabilitation. The ACLU of Kansas urges this Committee to pass HB 2496. Thank you.

¹ As of June 30, 2019, Court Services had 3,265 people on felony probation, and Community Corrections had 8,284 people on felony probation. Report of the Kansas Criminal Justice Reform Commission to the 2020 Kansas Legislature, page 43, <http://www.kslegresearch.org/KLRD-web/Committees/2019InterimDocs/2019-KS-Criminal-Justice-Reform-Commission-report.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1YXCRCFCcBKxZHfCN5OBiqA3NECvwkEtzMHhWVFE8Y-8xu9eh4XdjXwLo>