



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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For Immediate Release
July 23, 2015

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Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian testifies in support of
An Act relative to motor vehicle license suspension
Seeks to remove barrier to successful re-entry for individuals

BOSTON – Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian testified before the Joint Committee on Transportation Thurs., July 23, in support of *An Act relative to motor vehicle suspension*.

For more than two decades the Commonwealth has automatically suspended the driver's license of any individual convicted of a drug offense. Suspension can last for up to five years and reinstatement fees cost individuals a minimum of \$500.

“As Sheriff, one of my primary goals is to ensure the successful re-entry of individuals back to the community,” said Sheriff Koutoujian. “The existing license suspension rules are a significant barrier to re-entry.”

The legislation proposed by Senator Hariette Chandler and Representative Elizabeth Malia would not change the license suspension rules for those convicted of operating under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

In his testimony, Sheriff Koutoujian discussed how lack of access to a driver's license is a barrier to employment and housing opportunities.

“The current practice impacts approximately 7,000 individuals per year in Massachusetts and only about 2,500 individuals per year can afford the expensive reinstatement fee,” said the Sheriff. “Needless to say, without a driver's license individuals re-entering the community will have a harder time securing employment.”

“Without a license, individuals will also struggle to find housing and access the health care they need because they lack transportation, thus perpetuating the cycle of recidivism,” said Sheriff Koutoujian.

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