



TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL KEBEDE, ESQ.  
LD 421– Ought to Pass

**An Act to Eliminate Barriers to Reentry into the Community  
After Incarceration by Repealing Certain  
Driver's License Suspension Provisions**

Joint Standing Committee on  
Criminal Justice & Public Safety  
April 7, 2025

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Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, greetings. My name is Michael Kebede, and I am Policy Director at the ACLU of Maine, a statewide organization committed to advancing and preserving civil rights and civil liberties guaranteed by the Maine and U.S. Constitutions. On behalf of our members, we urge you to support LD 421.

Under current law, a court may “in addition to other authorized penalties, suspend the person's driver's license, permit, privilege to operate a motor vehicle or right to apply for or obtain a license for a period not to exceed 5 years.”<sup>1</sup>

When a person has been released from prison or is on probation or parole, they face many challenges to getting their life back on track. Their responsibilities include finding gainful employment, participating in family life, and potentially paying numerous debts, including restitution and fines. The ability to fulfill these obligations will determine if the person succeeds or fails in re-entry.

A driver's license plays a critical role in successfully overcoming these challenges. With a valid driver's license, a person has more options in employment, and with more options, they have a greater likelihood of meeting their financial obligations. If they're a parent, they can be fully engaged in their children's lives. This is especially true for people who live in areas where public transportation is limited—which is the case for most Maine communities.

Maine should join other states who have already eliminated these illogical and unfair drug-related suspension policies.

We urge you to vote *ought to pass*.

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<sup>1</sup> 17-A M.R.S. § 1103(6).