

April 4, 2025

Sen. Scott Dibble
Chair, Senate Committee on Transportation
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Erin Koegel and Rep. Jon Koznick
Co-chairs, House Committee on
Transportation Finance and Policy
Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: SF 2197 (Johnson Stewart) / HF 1970 (Virnig)

Dear Chair Dibble and Co-chairs Koenig and Koznick:

Ramsey County strongly supports SF 2197 / HF 1970, which would establish a driver's education financial assistance pilot program in the Department of Public Safety to expand access and availability to driver's education courses and drivers' licenses for eligible youth ages 15 to 24.

We support all efforts that address accessibility and affordability related to obtaining a driver's license. Efforts that make obtaining a driver's license more accessible and affordable contribute to a more inclusive and equitable society.

The shifting economy and the need for more workers in a post pandemic economy requires young adults to have their driver's licenses. The disparities between which young adults obtain licenses follow predictable racial and economic lines. Driver's licenses are necessary to provide reliable transportation to jobs, to work a more flexible work schedule and increase earnings. Without the means to get a driver's license, employment and professional opportunities are limited.

Prior to the pandemic, only 15 percent of teens received driver's education at school, compared to 95 percent in the 1970s. It was difficult for opportunity youth (youth involved in foster care, the justice system, experiencing homelessness or pregnant/parenting) to attain pre-pandemic, but with the shifting world of work it is even more imperative to obtain the driver's license as a needed employment credential.

Obtaining a driver's license broadens the range of available jobs opportunities and enhances employability. A driver's license is a very common requirement for jobs that can lift people out of poverty—these are construction, manufacturing, healthcare, automotive, and union trades such as electricians and plumbers. While a driver's license is not the sole determinant of economic mobility, it plays a significant role in breaking down barriers that can hinder individuals from accessing opportunities and improving their economic circumstances.

We hope that you will support these bills.

Sincerely,



Commissioner Rena Moran
Ramsey County Board of Commissioners
15 West Kellogg Boulevard, Suite 220
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Commissioner Kelly Miller
Ramsey County Board of Commissioners
15 West Kellogg Boulevard, Suite 220
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