



ENACTMENT SUMMARY

House Bill 29 **License suspensions** Effective April 9, 2025

On January 8, 2025, Governor DeWine signed into law House Bill 29 (Rep. Humphrey and Rep. Brewer), which makes changes to driver's license suspension law.

License suspensions for drug offenses

Under prior law, judges had the option to suspend a person's driver's license as a possible penalty for most drug-related offenses. The bill removes this option generally, allowing a court to suspend a license for a drug offense in limited circumstances:

1. If the drug offense occurs under the same circumstances as an OVI offense, the bill retains current law's mandatory driver's license suspension of up to five years
2. If a vehicle was used to further the commission of the drug offense, the bill retains existing law's discretionary license suspension of up to five years

If an offender's license is suspended under these circumstances, after two years from the date on which the sentence was imposed or on which the offender was release from a jail or prison term under the sentence (whichever is later), the offender may file a motion with the sentencing court requesting the suspension be terminated. The court may terminate the suspension if it finds good cause for the termination.

Child Support license suspensions

Under current law, a child support obligor may request limited driving privileges during a contempt hearing. The bill eliminates the requirement that the request occur during a contempt action to allow an obligor to motion the court with jurisdiction over the order to grant limited privileges at any time, unless the obligor's license is suspended for an offense that would prevent the granting of limited privileges.

License suspensions for failing to pay court costs/fines

The bill eliminates a license suspension as a potential penalty for failing to pay court costs or fines. The bill requires the registrar of the BMV to, within 30 days of the bill's effective date, remove all Class F suspensions imposed, prior to the bill's effective date, by the registrar under R.C. 4510.22 for failing to pay a court cost or fine. The registrar must also compile a list of all individuals whose licenses were suspended, prior to the bill's effective date, by a court under R.C. 2935.27 for failing to pay a court cost or fine, and forward that list to the respective courts, who must then order the registrar to remove the suspensions.

Failing to appear for minor misdemeanor

The bill retains the license suspension in current law as a possible penalty for failing to appear. However, when issued a citation for a minor misdemeanor, the bill requires the court to issue a supplemental citation if the offender fails to both appear in court or at the clerk of court to pay the fine and enter a guilty plea. If the offender fails to appear within 30 days of the issuance of the supplemental citation, the court may issue a summons or warrant for arrest.

Failure to provide proof of financial responsibility – lookback period and penalty

With regard to failing to provide proof of financial responsibility, the bill does the following:

- Reduces the lookback period from five years to one year
- Eliminates the suspension of a person's registration rights and impoundment of the certificate of registration and plates
- Eliminates the \$50 noncompliance fee when the person fails to voluntarily surrender their license, registration, or plates
- Increases from 15 days to 45 days the grace period during which a person may present proof of financial responsibility in order to avoid a license suspension
- Reduces the length of time a person must file an SR-22 from three years to one year
- Eliminates the criminal penalties for operating a motor vehicle without proof of financial responsibility during the period a person is required to file an SR-22 form with the registrar. Civil penalties would still apply.

Habitual truant license suspensions

The bill eliminates the authority of a school district to request a license suspension because of habitual truancy. Any student who has received a truancy-related suspension may file a motion with the juvenile court to have their suspension terminated.

The bill passed the Ohio House by a vote of 84-0 on December 6, 2023 and the Ohio Senate by a vote of 31-0 on December 18, 2024. The House voted the same day to concur on Senate amendments by a vote of 84-6. It was signed into law on January 8, 2025 and becomes effective on April 9, 2025.