

**Testimony of Jake Pregler**  
**Resident of Malvern, Pennsylvania**

Good morning, Chairman Nielson, Chairman Benninghoff, Chairman Ward, Chairman Flynn, and members of the House and Senate Transportation Committees. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Jake Pregler, and I live in Malvern, Pennsylvania.

I am here to speak about the urgent need for reform in Pennsylvania's current Ignition Interlock Limited License (ILL) application process that is tedious, antiquated, and monotonous, leaving individuals in the dark about their eligibility timing and unfairly impacting their personal and professional lives.

At present, the entire ILL process is rooted in outdated procedures. The application must be submitted via snail mail. Payments must be made using antiquated channels, including cashier's checks, and there is a severe lack of accessible, reliable online resources to determine one's eligibility. As it stands, individuals have no firm way to know if or when they are eligible to apply for ILL, other than by navigating a convoluted online rubric that is adjusted frequently and is difficult to interpret.

This creates a deeply frustrating situation where people are forced to make costly and time-consuming decisions without knowing whether they are even eligible. To illustrate, in order to even apply for ILL, individuals must:

- Pay out-of-pocket for any vehicle repairs incurred while their vehicle sat idle.
- Pay for a vehicle inspection and secure auto insurance.
- Schedule an appointment with a verified ignition interlock vendor—while being legally unable to drive to the appointment.
- Pay for the device installation and sign a contract for a monthly interlock plan.
- Cover monthly interlock and calibration fees, which begin accumulating immediately—even though they have not yet been approved for the license.

Only after completing all these steps can an individual submit the application, which requires additional costs (i.e. \$518): an application fee, a restoration fee, a duplicate license fee, chemical refusal fee, sent via certified mail and encouraged to pay by cashier's check. After mailing the application, the candidate then must wait over two weeks to receive a determination via standard mail, only to possibly find out they are ineligible after already spending a significant amount of money and effort.

Adding to the frustration, the DMV indicates that individuals may call for guidance, but phone lines are frequently tied up, and the individuals answering the calls cannot definitively confirm eligibility. This leaves applicants confused, frustrated, and financially strained—all while simply trying to comply with the law.

To help contextualize this problem, I'd like to share my own experience.

I am not a perfect human—I received a DUI in July 2023. Per PennDOT's instruction, I surrendered my license on December 8, 2023, at which time I was issued a DL-640 document confirming my license had been properly surrendered. My suspension commenced at that point, and my restoration letter listed June 23, 2025, as my official eligibility date.

As we approached that date, I began preparing. In March 2025, I proactively contacted the DMV to determine when I should begin the long and expensive process of repairing my vehicle, paying for inspection and insurance, evaluating ILL vendors, and scheduling the ignition interlock installation. I was told by a PennDOT representative that, according to the Ignition Interlock Limited License Eligibility Chart, "it appears Jake Pregler is eligible now," since individuals are typically allowed to petition for ILL six months into an 18-month suspension.

Per that discussion, I moved forward—believing I was eligible based on the information provided both on PennDOT documents and by their own representatives. I spent approximately \$1,400 on car repairs, \$200 on inspection, \$250 on insurance (monthly), and \$250 with Smart Start for interlock installation—plus their various fees. I also contacted Kathy from Smart Start per my lawyer, who encouraged me to also speak with my local constituent liaison office to double-check.

When I reached out to the liaison office, I was told—based on their direct communication with PennDOT—that I was not actually eligible until well after June 23, 2025. This conflicting information was incredibly frustrating. Despite contacting both PennDOT and my local liaison office, I still could not get a definitive answer to what should be a simple question: *When am I eligible? How do I get this answer without investing thousands of dollars first?*

Lastly, the inefficiencies of this process continue to adversely impact my professional life and others who travel for work as a living. I work as an Account Engineer. My company has been patient, flexible, and understanding throughout this process. However, they need to know when I will legally be able to drive again—and I still cannot provide them with a clear answer. This lack of clarity and consistency is unacceptable and continues to cause unnecessary stress.

With a more comprehensive, streamlined, and automated system, this confusion could be avoided altogether. Individuals like myself would be able to plan responsibly, make informed decisions, and avoid suffering mental and financial stress while trying to do the right thing.

In an effort to bring this process into the 21st century, I urge the Committee to consider the development of a more nimble, efficient, and transparent system. A modernized online portal or eligibility tool could allow individuals to:

- Accurately check their eligibility in real time using official state records.
- Apply online and track the status of their application.
- Submit payments electronically via modern methods like debit/credit cards.
- Receive digital notifications and updates rather than relying on slow, unreliable mail.
- Access clear, updated guidance on the requirements and steps involved.

These reforms would remove unnecessary barriers, reduce the financial and emotional toll on applicants, and streamline the process for all involved—ultimately making it easier for individuals to comply with the law and move forward with their lives in a safe and legal manner.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide this testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions.