

## TESTIMONY JUDGE MICHAEL J BARRASSE, JUDICIAL OUTREACH LIAISON

Good morning, Chairman Nielsen Chairman Benninghoff, Chairman Ward, Chairman Flynn and members of the House and Senate transportation committees thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

As the former three term District Attorney of Lackawanna County and a member of the Board of Directors for the National District Attorneys Association I was a strong proponent of mandatory minimum sentences and driver's license suspensions.

As Chairperson of the National Treatment Court Association and a supervising judge for 25 years of a Drug Treatment Court and DUI Court I recognize that we are pursuing contrary goals in the enforcement of driver's license suspensions

While we believe suspensions may deter some people from DUI we also recognize that often a majority of those serving a suspension are driving without a license and without insurance. They also serve as a barrier for success in rehabilitation.

We are operating courts that randomly and frequently test our participants for drugs and alcohol. We require that they get the drug and alcohol treatment they need as well as seek employment and encourage them to be active in their children's lives, yet they don't have a valid driver's license. The reality is that even those who are under the court's supervision are often driving without a license just to comply with the court's requirements.

I want to thank Secretary Carroll and the staff at PennDOT for examining the present suspension process and the streamlining of the ignition interlock process to ensure public safety and the offender's ability to drive with ignition interlock

The courts strive to balance four goals when sentencing individuals ,retribution ,deterrence ,incapacitation and rehabilitation.

Treatment courts utilize various strategies to achieve rehabilitation. The participants are under constant supervision by the court and probation officers, case managers and treatment providers. They face immediate sanctions for violation of the program, and they are incentivized as they progress.

The various provisions in the proposed changes mainly the immediate availability of ignition interlock licenses as well as restoration of driver's license upon successful completion of a treatment court allow these participants to earn the right to have a valid driver's license. It would also allow them to continue the path of success they have achieved.

Thank you for your time and I would be happy to answer questions.