

**Wisconsin State Legislature Passes a Bipartisan Reform to End Automatic Driver's License Revocation and Restore Discretion to Judges**

Madison, Wisconsin—The Wisconsin State Senate passed AB-177 today, which will end the automatic license revocation on the 4th Operating While Suspended (OWS) conviction and make such revocations discretionary with judges. The Wisconsin State Assembly passed AB-177 in June of 2009 with bipartisan support. The bill will now go to Governor Doyle, who supports the measure.

The language allows the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to apply the law change retroactively, which would immediately change the status of thousands of drivers from revoked to suspended.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation, judges, law enforcement, district attorneys, and the Wisconsin State Public Defender all supported this critical reform, as it will end thousands of unnecessary, non-safety related license revocations and give law enforcement and judges more time and resources to focus on serious traffic violations that threaten public safety.

The Center for Driver's License Recovery and Employability has worked on this reform for over two years as part of its goal to limit license suspension and revocation to unsafe driving. The group has demonstrated that driver's license suspensions and revocations disproportionately affect people who have low incomes in Wisconsin, many of whom are living in poverty. State Representative Tamara Grigsby and State Senator Lena Taylor, both of Milwaukee, sponsored the bill.

The Honorable James A. Gramling, Jr., a retired municipal court judge in Milwaukee and pro bono attorney for the Center for Driver's License Recovery and Employability, said that this critical change will contribute to the ability of persons to retain their driver's licenses, "A large number of the clients we represent are substantially affected by these automatic revocations, which many judges would not order upon review of the person's driving record. This revocation kept relatively safe, low-income drivers from being able to reinstate and hold on to their licenses."

The Center for Driver's License Recovery and Employability was established in March of 2007 to increase the number of licensed low-income drivers in Milwaukee County. The Center is part of Wisconsin Community Services (WCS), which advocates for justice and community safety, providing innovative opportunities for individuals to overcome adversity. Other major partners of the Center include the City of Milwaukee Municipal Court, Legal Action of Wisconsin, and Milwaukee Area Technical College.

