



MEMORANDUM

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

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To: Ald. Terry Witkowski
From: Richard L. Withers, Legislative Fiscal Analyst ext. 8532
Date: January 29, 2014
Subject: File Number 131427: Communication relating to the effect of administrative drivers license suspensions.

This memorandum has been prepared in response to your request for information related to citation experience for driving after suspension or revocation, unregistered vehicles or vehicles with expired registration or improper display of license plates and other related offenses.

A request has been made to the Milwaukee Police Department to obtain citation statistics for 2011 through 2013. I have also prepared a table (attached) with figures for the number of charges filed with the Municipal Court. It should be noted that not all citations result in charges filed or, of course, in actual convictions.

It is my understanding that the issue you are interested in exploring at the hearing on Thursday, January 30, 2014, before the Public Safety Committee on Communication File 131427 is related to the numbers of driver license suspensions that result from failure to pay fines or to satisfy judgments that are not the result of convictions for vehicle operating violations. These suspensions on the one hand contribute to obstacles to employment and may result in further violations for operating while suspended. On the other hand, these suspensions may not be directly related to a risk or propensity to drive in an unsafe manner.

Court Administrator Sheldyn Himle advises that Court staff is compiling statistics related to the numbers of driver license suspensions that result from non-payment of judgments. It should be noted that the term "administrative suspension" in Wisconsin generally refers to the automatic suspension of driving privileges upon conviction of Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) or Driving Under the Influence (DUI).

Sergeant Pfeiffer from the Police Department has advised that figures for driver license-related citations should be available in time for the hearing.

To place the attached Municipal Court statistics in context, driver license charges constituted more than 15.1% of 141,921 charges filed in 2011, more than 19.7% of 134,877 charges filed in 2012, and more than 25.1% of 111,268 charges filed in 2013.

Please contact the Bureau if you have further questions.

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