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**COMMENTS IN OPPOSITION TO 17-H-6213 –  
AN ACT RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES – REGISTRATION OF  
VEHICLES  
June 8, 2017**

The ACLU opposes this legislation that seeks to expand the denial of vehicle registration to individuals who may have outstanding unpaid interest or penalties on fines owed to a city or town. Legislation like this has been criticized all over the country for its problematic and counterproductive effects on poor Americans.

As the Brennan Center for Justice explains, “suspensions are counterproductive, as the enforcement mechanism actually inhibits future repayment of debt.” Driving without a registered vehicle leads to substantial penalties or even a revoked license, which simply prolongs and worsens the person’s financial issues and hardships. This in itself is challenging since the restrictions would deny the person the ability to drive to work, school, or any other related activity making them less able to meet their monetary obligations.

The ACLU believes that only traffic related fines should be considered when it comes to the revocation or denial of a car registration. Using a vehicle as a stick to make individuals pay for fines, interests or penalties to a city or town that may have nothing to do with a traffic violation is not appropriate. Additionally, the person’s ability to pay for said fines or penalties and the implementation of payment plans should be taken into consideration prior to any denial or revocation.

By expanding the types of unpaid fees that can lead to denial of a person’s motor vehicle registration, we believe this bill only makes a troublesome practice worse, and will burden poor communities unnecessarily. For these reasons, we are in objection to such legislation.