

Brianna Morgan, Petersburg Virginia

Statement from Brianna Morgan:

Hi, my name is Brianna Morgan. I live in Petersburg, Virginia. I'm here today to tell you my story. My license was taken from me, for court debt I couldn't pay. I'm also here today to tell you why I'm hopeful now for a better future, for my family and hundreds of thousands of others across Virginia.

My story started several years ago. I had a minor traffic infraction. But I had a major problem – I was surviving living with relatives, in a high-risk pregnancy, and with no money. I couldn't pay the court fees, and so Virginia took my driver's license away.

Without my license, I didn't drive, and my family suffered, including my children. My dad's a veteran who had a stroke and talks in a way that's pretty difficult to understand. He relies on me to help him at medical appointments – but without my license, I couldn't go be with him. Without my license, a six-minute drive to respond to my son, when he has asthma attacks at school, became an hour on the bus. Without my license, my own health suffered; rather than go to my specialists, I'd have to call an ambulance to go to the emergency room. And without my license, I couldn't take my kids places, to help them learn and grow and do stuff that all kids should be able to experience.

Thankfully, after several years, I got my license back late last year, and I've kept it since then. I can borrow a car, and get around. I can help my dad, take care of my son, and get to my own medical appointments. I can be a better mom to my kids. I am so happy for this.

I'm also happy that Virginia is turning a corner. Suspending people's driver's licenses for court debt they can't pay hurts families. It hurt mine. And it makes no sense. And so I'm pleased to see that Virginians are working together to end this wrong. Thank you.