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**To:** Coriell, Scott  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 23, 2015

**Gov. Shumlin & State's Attorney Kainen Announce Driver Restoration Day in Windsor County**

*Driver Restoration Day to be Held on December 11<sup>th</sup> in Windsor County*

**WINDSOR** – After a successful pilot program earlier this year, Gov. Peter Shumlin and Windsor County State's Attorney Michael Kainen today announced that a Driver Restoration Day will be held in Windsor County on December 11th. Vermonters who have had their license suspended for failure to pay traffic tickets will be eligible to pay \$25 per ticket to get their driving privileges reinstated. The effort is aimed at ensuring lower-income Vermonters are not forced to make choices between paying for overdue tickets or daily necessities as well as increasing public safety.

“No one is served by a system where Vermonters who cannot afford to pay traffic tickets are faced with the decision of breaking the law, and risking increased fines, in order to drive to work to earn a living,” said Gov. Shumlin. “We want Vermonters licensed, insured, and working, not stuck in a cycle of ballooning fees and fines that they'll never be able to pay.”

Driver Restoration Day was launched by the Governor, Chittenden County States Attorney TJ Donovan, and the Governor's Pathways from Poverty Council. The initial pilot program in Chittenden County earlier this year assisted over 1,200 residents of Chittenden, Lamoille, Franklin, Grand Isle, and Washington counties. Over 6,700 tickets were reduced and the state collected almost \$150,000. Some tickets were decades old.

The December 11<sup>th</sup> Driver Restoration Day in Windsor County will be open to all residents of Windsor County, and those who have received tickets in Windsor County. It will take place at the Vermont State Office Building at 118 Prospect Street in White River Junction.

Eligible Vermonters will be able to get their license reinstated by paying \$25 per outstanding ticket. Eligible Vermonters are those who have received traffic tickets and had their license suspended due to a failure or inability to pay the fines. Tickets must be delinquent; meaning a ticket is more than 75 days past due. People whose current suspension is a result of a DUI or certain other serious offenses are not eligible for this program. People should bring with them the following information: Driver's Name, Date of Birth, PID (License) Number, Ticket number(s), Location of ticket(s), Phone number. Payment methods will be limited to check or money order.

Further information can be found at [www.governor.vermont.gov/driverrestorationday](http://www.governor.vermont.gov/driverrestorationday).

About 22,000 Vermonters have their license suspended for failure to pay overdue traffic fees and fines. Because many Vermonters are compelled to drive to earn a living, the inability or failure to pay initial traffic tickets can lead to additional tickets, a cycle that can quickly make paying outstanding fines and fees extremely unaffordable. Eventually this can result in a criminal suspension of an individual's license. This situation disproportionately affects lower-income Vermonters who often struggle to pay traffic fines and contributes to the cycle of poverty, unemployment, and incarceration.

In addition to helping lower-income residents get their license reinstated, Driver Restoration Day helps increase public safety by helping to make sure more drivers are insured. Because a valid driver's license is required to purchase auto insurance, Vermonters driving with an expired license are most likely driving without proper auto insurance, putting other drivers and public safety at risk.

Christopher Curtis, staff attorney for Vermont Legal Aid and Co-Chair of the Governor's Pathways from Poverty Council noted that the Council's latest annual report to Gov. Shumlin identified license suspension as a significant barrier to economic advancement for Vermonters who find themselves unable to pay these fines. Curtis said that almost 40% of Reach Up families identify transportation as a primary barrier to success - he said many of them cannot afford to pay ticket fines and end up being unable to drive.

"For many families on public assistance, a \$200 ticket might as well be \$2,000; they simply cannot afford to pay," said Christopher Curtis. "This initiative represents a bold step forward to address the 'poverty trap' set by inability to pay civil ticket fines. This is a good deal for low-income families and for Vermont. It ensures reciprocity based on ability to pay, it gets people operating by the rules of the road, and it moves families out of poverty by ensuring Vermonters can get back to work."

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