

January 13, 2010

Governor Ted Strickland
Governor's Office
77 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215-6108

SENT VIA U.S. MAIL & VIA FAX TO 614/466-9354

Dear Governor Strickland:

We write you to express concern over a rule change recently adopted by the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles and the effect it is having and will continue to have on Ohio's homeless and economically struggling population.

Ohio Administrative Code Section 4501:1-1-21 was recently amended to require applicants for an Ohio driver's license and/or State of Ohio identification card to present proof of their Ohio residence street address in addition to documents verifying their identity.

Unfortunately, for potentially thousands of Ohioans, the ability to prove their residence street address in the state is not as simple as many of us might think. Chronic homelessness is a serious and growing problem across the state. Some, but certainly not all, of the people in this vulnerable situation reside in homeless shelters for varying lengths of time. As a result, the State of Ohio thankfully has a policy allowing a "Certification of Residency" demonstrating residency at a shelter to be used as residency confirmation under OAC Sec. 4501:1-1-21(H)(20). However, we are troubled by reports that some BMV locations have not accepted these forms when presented.

For many others, staying in shelters is not a viable or desired option for a multitude of reasons. For these people, their residence may include living outside on the streets, under bridges, in abandoned buildings, temporarily with relatives and/or friends and a variety of other locations and circumstances that do not lend themselves well to being able to definitively "prove" their residence address. In addition, the ongoing problems of home foreclosure, job losses and underemployment mean those forced to adopt such living arrangements is growing. The newly amended BMV rule 4501:1-1-21 list of acceptable documents does not include such alternate living arrangements, even though they are recognized residences for purposes of voting (see R.C. 3503.02(I)).

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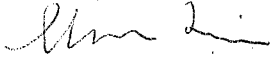


The end result for this vulnerable population is the BMV policy makes it much more difficult for thousands of Ohioans to obtain needed medical care, government services, housing, employment and various other services that often require one to have a state driver's license or state ID card.

We trust you agree that erecting even more barriers to prevent the most vulnerable among us from accessing much-needed resources is not in the best interest of the State of Ohio and its residents, and we hope you will take the necessary and immediate steps to correct this problem. Our suggestion is to remove the requirement for residence street address documentation completely from OAC 4501:1-1-21 and any related sections where the requirement appears.

Should you have any questions about this letter or our position on this issue please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Christine Link
Executive Director

cc: Carolyn Williams, Acting Registrar, Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles
Cathy Collins-Taylor, Director, Ohio Dept. of Public Safety