

2019 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 611 (Substitute for House Bill No. 255 by Representative Magee)

BY REPRESENTATIVE MAGEE

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

CRIMINAL/PROCEDURE: Provides relative to the payment of fines, fees, costs, restitution, and other monetary obligations related to an offender's conviction

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact Code of Criminal Procedure Article 885.1 and Section 3 of Act No.
3 260 of the 2017 Regular Session of the Legislature as amended by Act Nos. 137 and
4 668 of the 2018 Regular Session of the Legislature, relative to the financial
5 obligations for criminal offenders; to provide relative to the court's authority to
6 suspend the driver's license of a defendant for failure to pay a criminal fine; to delay
7 the effective date of certain provisions in Act No. 260 of the 2017 Regular Session
8 of the Legislature which provided relative to the financial obligations for criminal
9 offenders; to provide relative to the payment of fines, fees, costs, restitution, and
10 other monetary obligations related to an offender's conviction; to require the court
11 to determine the offender's ability to pay the financial obligations imposed; to
12 authorize the court to waive, modify, or create a payment plan for the offender's
13 financial obligations; to provide relative to the court's authority to extend probation
14 under certain circumstances; to provide relative to the recovery of uncollected
15 monetary obligations at the end of a probation period; to provide for legislative
16 intent; to provide relative to the disbursement of collected payments; to authorize the
17 court to impose certain conditions in lieu of payment in certain situations; to provide
18 relative to the penalties imposed when an offender fails to make certain payments or
19 fails to appear for a hearing relative to missed payments; to require notice to an
20 offender upon his failure to make certain payments; and to provide for related
21 matters.

1 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

2 Section 1. Code of Criminal Procedure Article 885.1 is hereby amended and
3 reenacted to read as follows:

4 Art. 885.1. Suspension of driving privileges; failure to pay criminal fines

5 A. When a fine is levied against a person convicted of any violation of the
6 Louisiana Highway Regulatory Act or any municipal or parish ordinance regulating
7 traffic in any municipality or in any parish, and the defendant is granted an extension
8 of time to pay the fine, the following shall apply:

9 (1) The judge of the court having jurisdiction may order the driver's license
10 of the defendant to be surrendered to the sheriff or official of the court designated to
11 collect fines for a period of time not to exceed one hundred eighty days.

12 (2) Upon receipt of a surrendered driver's license, the sheriff or official of
13 the court designated to collect fines shall issue a temporary permit for a period not
14 to exceed one hundred eighty days or for a period of time set forth by the judge
15 having jurisdiction. The temporary permits, the procedure for distributing such
16 permits, and the rules and regulations associated with such permits shall be the same
17 as devised by the Department of Public Safety and Corrections as required by R.S.
18 32:411.1.

19 (3) If, after expiration of one hundred eighty days, the defendant has not paid
20 the fine, the sheriff or the official of the court designated to collect fines shall
21 forward the license to the Department of Public Safety and Corrections. Upon
22 receipt of the defendant's surrendered driver's license, the department shall suspend
23 the driver's license of the defendant. The suspension shall begin when the
24 department receives written notification from the court, and the department shall
25 send immediate written notification to the defendant informing the defendant of the
26 suspension of driving privileges.

27 B. When a fine is levied against a person convicted of any criminal offense,
28 including ~~except for a conviction of~~ any violation of the Louisiana Highway
29 Regulatory Act or any municipal or parish ordinance regulating traffic in any

1 municipality or in any parish, and the defendant is granted an extension of time to
2 pay the fine, the following shall apply:

3 (1) If, on motion of the defendant, the court finds that the defendant is able
4 but has wilfully refused to pay the fine, the judge of the court having jurisdiction
5 may order the driver's license to be surrendered to the sheriff or official of the court
6 ~~collecting~~ designated to collect fines for a period of time not to exceed one hundred
7 eighty days. ~~If, after expiration of one hundred eighty days, the defendant has not~~
8 ~~paid the fine, the sheriff or official of the court designated to collect fines shall~~
9 ~~forward the license to the Department of Public Safety and Corrections.~~

10 ~~B.~~(2) Upon receipt of a surrendered driver's license, the sheriff or court
11 official ~~responsible for collection of such~~ designated to collect fines shall issue a
12 temporary permit for a period not to exceed one hundred eighty days or for a period
13 of time set forth by the judge having jurisdiction. The temporary permits, the
14 procedure for distributing such permits, and the rules and regulations associated with
15 such permits shall be the same as devised by the Department of Public Safety and
16 Corrections as required by R.S. 32:411.1.

17 ~~C.~~(3) If, after expiration of one hundred eighty days, the court, on motion of
18 the defendant, finds that the defendant remains able but has not paid wilfully refused
19 to pay the fine, the sheriff or official of the court designated to collect fines shall
20 forward the license to the Department of Public Safety and Corrections. Upon
21 receipt of the defendant's surrendered driver's license, the department shall suspend
22 the driver's license of the defendant. The suspension shall begin when the
23 department receives written notification from the court, and the department shall
24 send immediate written notification to the defendant informing ~~him~~ the defendant of
25 the suspension of driving privileges.

26 ~~D.~~C. The department shall ~~not~~ reinstate, return, reissue, or renew a driver's
27 license in its possession pursuant to this Article ~~until~~ upon payment of the fine and
28 any additional administrative cost, fee, or penalty required by the judge having the

1 jurisdiction and any other cost, fee, or penalty required by the department in
2 accordance with R.S. 32:414(H) or other applicable cost, fee, or penalty provision.

3 Section 2. Section 3 of Act No. 260 of the 2017 Regular Session of the Legislature
4 as amended by Act Nos. 137 and 668 of the 2018 Regular Session of the Legislature is
5 hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

6 Section 3. The provisions of this Act shall become effective on August 1,
7 ~~2019~~ 2021.

8 Section 3. The provisions of this Act shall become effective on August 1, 2019.

9 Section 4. It is the intent of the legislature that the changes made to Code of
10 Criminal Procedure Article 885.1 in Act No. 260 of the 2017 Regular Session of the
11 Legislature, as amended by Act Nos. 137 and 668 of the 2018 Regular Session of the
12 Legislature, shall never go into effect and that the provisions of this Act shall control.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 611 Engrossed

2019 Regular Session

Magee

Abstract: Provides relative to the court's authority to suspend a defendant's driver's license for failure to pay a criminal fine and delays the effective date of certain provisions of Act No. 260 of the 2017 R.S., relative to the financial obligations for criminal offenders, to August 1, 2021.

Act No. 260 of the 2017 R.S. makes changes to present law relative to the financial obligations of criminal offenders, including but not limited to the following:

- (1) Provides that notwithstanding any provision of present law, prior to ordering the imposition of any financial obligation, the court shall determine whether payment in full of the aggregate amount of all the financial obligations imposed upon the defendant would cause substantial financial hardship to the defendant or his dependents. This determination cannot be waived by the defendant.
- (2) Provides that "substantial financial hardship" has the same meaning as defined by present law (R.S. 15:175) relative to determinations of indigence for purposes of appointment of counsel and defines "financial obligation" as any fine, fee, cost, restitution, or other monetary obligation authorized by present law and imposed upon the defendant as part of a criminal sentence, incarceration, or as a condition of the defendant's release on probation or parole.
- (3) If the court determines that payment in full of the aggregate amount of all financial obligations imposed upon the defendant would cause substantial financial hardship to the defendant or his dependents, requires the court to either waive all or any

- portion of the financial obligations or order a payment plan that requires the defendant to make a monthly payment to fulfill the financial obligations.
- (4) In cases where restitution has been ordered, provides that half of the defendant's monthly payment shall be distributed toward the defendant's restitution obligation.
 - (5) Provides that during any periods of unemployment, homelessness, or other circumstances in which the defendant is unable to make the monthly payment, the court or the defendant's probation and parole officer is authorized to impose a payment alternative, including but not limited to any of the following: substance abuse treatment, education, job training, or community service.
 - (6) If the defendant's circumstances and ability to pay change, authorizes the court, upon motion of the defendant or his attorney, to reevaluate the defendant's ability to continue the monthly payments and either waive or modify the defendant's financial obligation, or recalculate the amount of the monthly payment.
 - (7) Provides that the defendant's outstanding financial obligations may be forgiven and considered paid-in-full if the defendant makes consistent monthly payments for either 12 consecutive months or consistent monthly payments for half of the defendant's term of supervision, whichever is longer.
 - (8) Amends present law to provide that if it is determined, pursuant to proposed law, that payment in full of the aggregate amount of all financial obligations imposed upon the defendant would cause substantial financial hardship to the defendant or his dependents, the defendant cannot be imprisoned for failure to pay fines or costs imposed as part of the sentence.
 - (9) Prohibits the court from extending a defendant's probation for the purpose of collecting any unpaid monetary obligation but allows the court to refer the unpaid monetary obligation to the office of debt recovery pursuant to present law (R.S. 47:1676). Further amends the present law definition of "agency" to include courts solely for the purpose of recovering unpaid monetary obligations that remain at the end of the defendant's probation period.
 - (10) If a court authorizes a payment plan pursuant to proposed law and the defendant fails to make a payment, requires the court to serve the defendant with a citation for a rule to show cause why the defendant should not be found in contempt of court and provides the information that must be included in the notice.

Act No. 260 of the 2017 R.S. further provided that these changes to present law shall be effective Aug. 1, 2018.

In the 2018 R.S., Act Nos. 137 and 668 delayed the effective date of these changes from Aug. 1, 2018, to Aug. 1, 2019.

Proposed law delays the effective date of these provisions for two additional years from Aug. 1, 2019, to Aug. 1, 2021, except for certain changes made to present law (C.Cr.P. Art. 885.1) provisions regarding to the court's authority to suspend the driver's license of the defendant which shall be effective, pursuant to proposed law, on Aug. 1, 2019.

Proposed law amends present law provisions regarding the court's authority to suspend the driver's license of the defendant to provide relative to the procedure by which a defendant's driver's license may be suspended under the following circumstances:

- (1) When a fine is levied against a person convicted of any violation of the La. Highway Regulatory Act or any municipal or parish ordinance regulating traffic in any

- municipality or in any parish, and the defendant is granted an extension of time to pay the fine.
- (2) When a fine is levied against a person convicted of any misdemeanor or felony criminal offense, except for a conviction of any violation of the La. Highway Regulatory Act or any municipal or parish ordinance regulating traffic in any municipality or in any parish, and the defendant is granted an extension of time to pay the fine and is able but has wilfully refused to pay the fine. Further provides that the court's determination of whether the defendant is able but willfully refuses to pay the fine shall be upon motion of the defendant.

(Amends C.Cr.P. Art. 885.1 and Act No. 260 of the 2017 R.S., §3, as amended by Act Nos. 137 and 668 of the 2018 R.S.)