



June 13, 2022

The Honorable Jack O'Malley  
Chair, House Transportation Committee  
Michigan House of Representatives  
House Office Building, Room 521  
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Chair O'Malley and Members of the House Transportation Committee:

The Epilepsy Foundation and the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan write to express our support for HB 6216 and HB 6217 related to drivers licensing of people who have experienced seizures. We particularly thank Chair O'Malley for his leadership on this issue.

The Epilepsy Foundation is the leading national voluntary health organization that speaks on behalf of the at least 3.4 million Americans with epilepsy and seizures. We foster the wellbeing of children and adults affected by seizures through research programs, educational activities, advocacy, and direct services. The Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan is an affiliate of the Foundation—responsible for the entire state of Michigan and serving the 108,900 Michiganders with epilepsy.

Epilepsy is a brain disorder that causes recurring, unprovoked seizures. Seizures are sudden surges of abnormal and excessive electrical activity in your brain and can affect how you appear or act. There are many different types of seizures and varying levels of seizure control. Some aspects of epilepsy like seizure type, frequency and severity and side effects of medications can impact peoples' lifestyle and independence including work, school, travel and transportation.

Driving a car is so critical to employment, socialization, and self-esteem that people with epilepsy list it as one of their main concerns. Most people with epilepsy can safely drive, though they must always stay acutely attune to if and when they experience breakthrough seizures and act and report accordingly. People with epilepsy, physicians and regulators share the responsibility of protecting the public, while still providing reasonable opportunity for individuals with seizures to drive a car.

The Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan supports HB 6216 and HB 6217 because they balance the need to protect public and individual safety while promoting independence of certain people with epilepsy and seizures for whom it's safest to

National Headquarters

3540 Crain Highway, Suite 675, Bowie, MD 20716

301.459.3700



drive. In line with a consensus statement from the American Academy of Neurology, the American Epilepsy Society and the Epilepsy Foundation on driver licensing and epilepsy, this bill:

- Aims to rely on a seizure-free interval of 3 months or more. In Michigan, where the unemployment rate is currently 4.3% (higher than the national average of 3.6%) and public transportation is lacking in many areas, allowing as many people with epilepsy to safely drive to their jobs can help combat this unemployment crisis—which in turn, helps individuals fully participate in society and fuels the economy.;
- Specifies certain favorable modifiers that could alter the interval such as the seizure occurred because of a medically directed medication change; it was a partial seizure that did not interfere with the individual’s consciousness or ability to operate a motor vehicle; and the seizure has an established pattern of being purely nocturnal;
- Maintains the treating physician’s role to providing pertinent medical facts through submission of a statement of physical or mental history so that an independent decision can be made; and
- Provides notice and opportunity for a hearing before an individual’s license is suspended.

Thank you again for your leadership and we look forward to working with you as HB 6216 and HB 6217 advance. If you have any questions, please contact President of the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan Brianna Romines at [bromines@epilepsymichigan.org](mailto:bromines@epilepsymichigan.org) or (248) 809-4819.

Sincerely,

Brianna Romines  
President  
Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan

Laura Thrall  
President & CEO  
Epilepsy Foundation