By Senator Wright

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A bill to be entitled An act relating to fines and fees; amending s. 28.24, F.S.; revising specified service charges for recording documents with the clerk of the circuit court; amending s. 28.246, F.S.; revising the methods by which the clerk of the circuit court may accept payments for certain fees, charges, costs, and fines; requiring the court to enroll certain persons in a monthly payment plan under certain circumstances; providing requirements for the payment plan; authorizing a court to convert certain fines and fees to community service under specified circumstances; authorizing certain persons to have their payment plans terminated if certain requirements are met; amending s. 28.42, F.S.; requiring the Office of the State Courts Administrator to develop a uniform payment plan form by a specified date; providing minimum criteria for the form; amending s. 318.15, F.S.; deleting provisions specifying procedures to be used if a person fails to comply with certain courtordered requirements; authorizing certain persons to reinstate their suspended driver licenses under certain circumstances; amending s. 322.245, F.S.; authorizing certain persons to reinstate their suspended driver licenses under certain circumstances; deleting provisions requiring the department to suspend the driver licenses of certain persons who have failed to pay financial obligations for certain criminal offenses; deleting provisions addressing the

14-01756B-20 20201328 30 reinstatement of such suspended licenses; amending ss. 31 34.191 and 320.03, F.S.; conforming cross-references; 32 reenacting ss. 27.52(5)(i) and 57.082(6), F.S., relating to determination of indigent status, to 33 34 incorporate the amendment made to s. 28.24, F.S., in 35 references thereto; providing an effective date. 36 37 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida: 38 39 Section 1. Subsection (26) of section 28.24, Florida Statutes, is amended to read: 40 28.24 Service charges.—The clerk of the circuit court shall 41 42 charge for services rendered manually or electronically by the clerk's office in recording documents and instruments and in 43 44 performing other specified duties. These charges may not exceed those specified in this section, except as provided in s. 45 28.345. 46 47 (26) (a) For receiving and disbursing all restitution payments, per payment: 3.50, from which the clerk shall remit 48 49 0.50 per payment to the Department of Revenue for deposit into 50 the General Revenue Fund. 51 (b) For receiving and disbursing all partial payments, 52 other than restitution payments, for which an administrative 53 processing service charge is not imposed pursuant to s. 28.246, 54 per month..... (b) (c) For setting up a payment plan, a one-time 55 56 administrative processing charge: in lieu of a per month charge 57 <u>under paragraph (b)</u>......25.00 58 (c) In lieu of the administrative processing charge in

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Section 2. Section 28.246, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

- 28.246 Payment of court-related fines or other monetary penalties, fees, charges, and costs; monthly partial payments; community service; distribution of funds.—
- (1) The clerk of the circuit court shall report the following information to the Legislature and the Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation on a form, and using guidelines developed by the clerks of court, through their association and in consultation with the Office of the State Courts Administrator:
- (a) The total amount of mandatory fees, service charges, and costs assessed; the total amount underassessed, if any, which is the amount less than the minimum amount required by law to be assessed; and the total amount collected.
- (b) The total amount of discretionary fees, service charges, and costs assessed and the total amount collected.
- (c) The total amount of mandatory fines and other monetary penalties assessed; the total amount underassessed, if any, which is the amount less than the minimum amount required by law to be assessed; and the total amount collected.
 - (d) The total amount of discretionary fines and other

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monetary penalties assessed and the total amount collected.

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The clerk, in reporting to the Legislature and corporation, shall separately identify the monetary amount assessed and subsequently discharged or converted to community service, to a judgment or lien, or to time served. The form developed by the clerks shall include separate entries for recording the amount discharged and the amount converted. If a court waives, suspends, or reduces an assessment as authorized by law, the portion waived, suspended, or reduced may not be deemed assessed or underassessed for purposes of the reporting requirements of this section. The clerk also shall report a collection rate for mandatory and discretionary assessments. In calculating the rate, the clerk shall deduct amounts discharged or converted from the amount assessed. The clerk shall submit the report on an annual basis 90 days after the end of the county fiscal year. The clerks and the courts shall develop by October 1, 2012, the form and guidelines to govern the accurate and consistent reporting statewide of assessments as provided in this section. The clerk shall use the new reporting form and guidelines in submitting the report for the county fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for each year thereafter.

- (2) The clerk of the circuit court shall establish and maintain a system of accounts receivable for court-related fees, charges, and costs.
- (3) Court costs, fines, and other dispositional assessments shall be enforced by order of the courts, collected by the clerks of the circuit and county courts, and disbursed in accordance with authorizations and procedures as established by

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(4) The clerk of the circuit court shall accept monthly partial payments for court-related fees, service charges, costs, and fines electronically, by mail, in person, or by a communitybased organization authorized by the clerk to collect such payments in accordance with the terms of an established payment plan and shall enroll in a monthly payment plan any person. An individual seeking to defer payment of fees, service charges, costs, or fines imposed by operation of law or order of the court under any provision of general law shall apply to the clerk for enrollment in a payment plan. The clerk shall enter into a payment plan with an individual who the court determines is indigent for costs. A monthly payment amount shall be calculated based upon all fines, fees, service charges, and all anticipated costs and must, is presumed to correspond to the person's ability to pay. The monthly payment shall be the greater of \$10 per month, per county or if the amount does not exceed 2 percent of the person's annual net income, as defined in s. 27.52(1), divided by 12. If a county has more than one case open for a person against whom fines, service charges, fees, and costs have been assessed, the monthly payment plan must include the amounts assessed for all of the cases. If a person is not in custody, the plan must provide a 30-day grace period for the person to make the first payment. If a person is incarcerated, the first payment is due 90 days after the date the person is released from custody. The court may, on its own motion or by petition, review and modify the reasonableness of the payment plan or convert the outstanding fees, service charges, costs, or fines to community service if the court

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determines that the person is otherwise unable to comply with the terms of the payment plan.

- (5) A person who is indigent as described in s. 27.52(2), a person who receives public assistance as defined in s. 409.2554, or a person whose household income is below 200 percent of the federal poverty level based on the current year's federal poverty guidelines may petition the court to declare that the financial obligations under the payment plan have been met and to terminate the payment plan if, up to the date of the petition, the person made timely payments for:
- (a) Twelve consecutive months for any financial obligation that was \$500 or less;
- (b) Twenty-four consecutive months for any financial obligation that was greater than \$500 but \$1,000 or less; or
- (c) Thirty-six consecutive months for any financial obligation that was greater than \$1,000.
- $\underline{(6)}$ When receiving partial payment of fees, service charges, court costs, and fines, clerks shall distribute funds according to the following order of priority:
- (a) That portion of fees, service charges, court costs, and fines to be remitted to the state for deposit into the General Revenue Fund.
- (b) That portion of fees, service charges, court costs, and fines required to be retained by the clerk of the court or deposited into the Clerks of the Court Trust Fund within the Department of Revenue.
- (c) That portion of fees, service charges, court costs, and fines payable to state trust funds, allocated on a pro rata basis among the various authorized funds if the total collection

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amount is insufficient to fully fund all such funds as provided by law.

(d) That portion of fees, service charges, court costs, and fines payable to counties, municipalities, or other local entities, allocated on a pro rata basis among the various authorized recipients if the total collection amount is insufficient to fully fund all such recipients as provided by law.

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To offset processing costs, clerks may impose either a per-month service charge pursuant to s. 28.24(26) (b) or a one-time administrative processing service charge at the inception of the payment plan pursuant to s. 28.24(26) (b) or (c) s. 28.24(26) (c).

(7) (6) A clerk of court shall pursue the collection of any fees, service charges, fines, court costs, and liens for the payment of attorney fees and costs pursuant to s. 938.29 which remain unpaid after 90 days by referring the account to a private attorney who is a member in good standing of The Florida Bar or collection agent who is registered and in good standing pursuant to chapter 559. In pursuing the collection of such unpaid financial obligations through a private attorney or collection agent, the clerk of the court must have attempted to collect the unpaid amount through a collection court, collections docket, or other collections process, if any, established by the court, find this to be cost-effective and follow any applicable procurement practices. The collection fee, including any reasonable attorney's fee, paid to any attorney or collection agent retained by the clerk may be added to the balance owed in an amount not to exceed 40 percent of the amount

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owed at the time the account is referred to the attorney or agent for collection. The clerk shall give the private attorney or collection agent the application for the appointment of court-appointed counsel regardless of whether the court file is otherwise confidential from disclosure.

Section 3. Section 28.42, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

- 28.42 Manual of filing fees, charges, costs, and fines: uniform payment plan forms.—
- (1) The clerks of court, through their association and in consultation with the Office of the State Courts Administrator, shall prepare and disseminate a manual of filing fees, service charges, costs, and fines imposed pursuant to state law, for each type of action and offense, and classified as mandatory or discretionary. The manual also shall classify the fee, charge, cost, or fine as court-related revenue or noncourt-related revenue. The clerks, through their association, shall disseminate this manual to the chief judge, state attorney, public defender, and court administrator in each circuit and to the clerk of the court in each county. The clerks, through their association and in consultation with the Office of the State Courts Administrator, shall at a minimum update and disseminate this manual on July 1 of each year.
- (2) By October 1, 2021, the Office of the State Courts

 Administrator, in consultation with the clerks of court and the

 Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation, shall develop a

 uniform payment plan form for use by persons seeking to

 establish a payment plan in accordance with s. 28.246. The form

 must inform the person about the minimum payment due each month,

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the term of the plan, acceptable payment methods, and the circumstances under which a case may be sent to collections for nonpayment.

Section 4. Section 318.15, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

318.15 Failure to comply with civil penalty or to appear; penalty.—

(1) (a) If a person fails to comply with the civil penalties provided in s. 318.18 within the time period specified in s. 318.14(4), fails to enter into or comply with the terms of a penalty payment plan with the clerk of the court in accordance with ss. 318.14 and 28.246, fails to attend driver improvement school, or fails to appear at a scheduled hearing, the clerk of the court shall notify the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles of such failure within 10 days after such failure. Upon receipt of such notice, the department shall immediately issue an order suspending the driver license and privilege to drive of such person effective 20 days after the date the order of suspension is mailed in accordance with s. 322.251(1), (2), and (6). Any such suspension of the driving privilege which has not been reinstated, including a similar suspension imposed outside Florida, shall remain on the records of the department for a period of 7 years from the date imposed and shall be removed from the records after the expiration of 7 years from the date it is imposed. The department may not accept the resubmission of such suspension.

(b) However, A person who elects to attend driver improvement school and has paid the civil penalty as provided in s. 318.14(9) but who subsequently fails to attend the driver

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improvement school within the time specified by the court is deemed to have admitted the infraction and shall be adjudicated quilty. If the person received an 18-percent reduction pursuant to s. 318.14(9), the person must pay the clerk of the court that amount and a processing fee of up to \$18, from which the clerk shall remit \$3 to the Department of Revenue for deposit into the General Revenue Fund, after which additional penalties, court costs, or surcharges may not be imposed for the violation. In all other such cases, the person must pay the clerk a processing fee of up to \$18, from which the clerk shall remit \$3 to the Department of Revenue for deposit into the General Revenue Fund, after which additional penalties, court costs, or surcharges may not be imposed for the violation. The clerk of the court shall notify the department of the person's failure to attend driver improvement school and points shall be assessed pursuant to s. 322.27.

(2) (e) A person who is charged with a traffic infraction may request a hearing within 180 days after the date upon which the violation occurred, regardless of any action taken by the court or the department to suspend the person's driving privilege, and, upon request, the clerk must set the case for hearing. The person shall be given a form for requesting that his or her driving privilege be reinstated. If the 180th day after the date upon which the violation occurred is a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the person who is charged must request a hearing within 177 days after the date upon which the violation occurred; however, the court may grant a request for a hearing made more than 180 days after the date upon which the violation occurred. This subsection paragraph does not affect

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the assessment of late fees as otherwise provided in this chapter.

(2) After the suspension of a person's driver license and privilege to drive under subsection (1), the license and privilege may not be reinstated until the person complies with the terms of a periodic payment plan or a revised payment plan with the clerk of the court pursuant to ss. 318.14 and 28.246 or with all obligations and penalties imposed under s. 318.18 and presents to a driver license office a certificate of compliance issued by the court, together with a nonrefundable service charge of \$60 imposed under s. 322.29, or presents a certificate of compliance and pays the service charge to the clerk of the court or a driver licensing agent authorized under s. 322.135 clearing such suspension. Of the charge collected, \$22.50 shall be remitted to the Department of Revenue to be deposited into the Highway Safety Operating Trust Fund. Such person must also be in compliance with requirements of chapter 322 before reinstatement.

(3) A person whose driver license was suspended solely for nonpayment pursuant to this section before July 1, 2020, and who is otherwise eligible to drive may reinstate his or her driver license upon payment of a reinstatement fee The clerk shall notify the department of persons who were mailed a notice of violation of s. 316.074(1) or s. 316.075(1)(c)1. pursuant to s. 316.0083 and who failed to enter into, or comply with the terms of, a penalty payment plan, or order with the clerk to the local hearing officer or failed to appear at a scheduled hearing within 10 days after such failure, and shall reference the person's driver license number, or in the case of a business

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entity, vehicle registration number.

- (a) Upon receipt of such notice, the department, or authorized agent thereof, may not issue a license plate or revalidation sticker for any motor vehicle owned or co-owned by that person pursuant to s. 320.03(8) until the amounts assessed have been fully paid.
- (b) After the issuance of the person's license plate or revalidation sticker is withheld pursuant to paragraph (a), the person may challenge the withholding of the license plate or revalidation sticker only on the basis that the outstanding fines and civil penalties have been paid pursuant to s. 320.03(8).

Section 5. Subsections (1) and (5) of section 322.245, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

- 322.245 Suspension of license upon failure of person charged with specified offense under chapter 316, chapter 320, or this chapter to comply with directives ordered by traffic court or upon failure to pay child support in non-IV-D cases as provided in chapter 61 or failure to pay any financial obligation in any other criminal case.—
- (1) If a person charged with a violation of any of the criminal offenses enumerated in s. 318.17 or with the commission of any offense constituting a misdemeanor under chapter 320 or this chapter fails to comply with all of the directives of the court within the time allotted by the court, other than the payment of fines, service charges, fees, or costs, the clerk of the traffic court shall mail to the person, at the address specified on the uniform traffic citation, a notice of such failure, notifying him or her that, if he or she does not comply

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with the directives of the court within 30 days after the date of the notice and pay a delinquency fee of up to \$25 to the clerk, from which the clerk shall remit \$10 to the Department of Revenue for deposit into the General Revenue Fund, his or her driver license will be suspended. The notice shall be mailed no later than 5 days after such failure. The delinquency fee may be retained by the office of the clerk to defray the operating costs of the office.

- (5) (a) A person whose driver license was suspended solely for nonpayment pursuant to this section before July 1, 2020, and who is otherwise eligible to drive may reinstate his or her driver license upon payment of a reinstatement fee When the department receives notice from a clerk of the court that a person licensed to operate a motor vehicle in this state under the provisions of this chapter has failed to pay financial obligations for any criminal offense other than those specified in subsection (1), in full or in part under a payment plan pursuant to s. 28.246(4), the department shall suspend the license of the person named in the notice.
- (b) The department must reinstate the driving privilege when the clerk of the court provides an affidavit to the department stating that:
- 1. The person has satisfied the financial obligation in full or made all payments currently due under a payment plan;
- 2. The person has entered into a written agreement for payment of the financial obligation if not presently enrolled in a payment plan; or
- 3. A court has entered an order granting relief to the person ordering the reinstatement of the license.

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(c) The department shall not be held liable for any license suspension resulting from the discharge of its duties under this section.

Section 6. Subsection (1) of section 34.191, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

34.191 Fines and forfeitures; dispositions.-

(1) All fines and forfeitures arising from offenses tried in the county court shall be collected and accounted for by the clerk of the court and, other than the charge provided in s. 318.1215, disbursed in accordance with ss. 28.2402, 34.045, 142.01, and 142.03 and subject to $\underline{s.\ 28.246(6)}$ and $\underline{(7)}$ the provisions of s. 28.246(5) and $\underline{(6)}$. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, all fines and forfeitures arising from operation of the provisions of s. 318.1215 shall be disbursed in accordance with that section.

Section 7. Subsection (8) of section 320.03, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

320.03 Registration; duties of tax collectors; International Registration Plan.—

(8) If the applicant's name appears on the list referred to in s. 316.1001(4), s. 316.1967(6), s. 318.15(3), or s. 713.78(13), a license plate or revalidation sticker may not be issued until that person's name no longer appears on the list or until the person presents a receipt from the governmental entity or the clerk of court that provided the data showing that the fines outstanding have been paid. This subsection does not apply to the owner of a leased vehicle if the vehicle is registered in the name of the lessee of the vehicle. The tax collector and the clerk of the court are each entitled to receive monthly, as

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costs for implementing and administering this subsection, 10 percent of the civil penalties and fines recovered from such persons. As used in this subsection, the term "civil penalties and fines" does not include a wrecker operator's lien as described in s. 713.78(13). If the tax collector has private tag agents, such tag agents are entitled to receive a pro rata share of the amount paid to the tax collector, based upon the percentage of license plates and revalidation stickers issued by the tag agent compared to the total issued within the county. The authority of any private agent to issue license plates shall be revoked, after notice and a hearing as provided in chapter 120, if he or she issues any license plate or revalidation sticker contrary to the provisions of this subsection. This section applies only to the annual renewal in the owner's birth month of a motor vehicle registration and does not apply to the transfer of a registration of a motor vehicle sold by a motor vehicle dealer licensed under this chapter, except for the transfer of registrations which includes the annual renewals. This section does not affect the issuance of the title to a motor vehicle, notwithstanding s. 319.23(8)(b).

Section 8. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 28.24, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, paragraph (i) of subsection (5) of section 27.52, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

- 27.52 Determination of indigent status.
- (5) INDIGENT FOR COSTS.—A person who is eligible to be represented by a public defender under s. 27.51 but who is represented by private counsel not appointed by the court for a reasonable fee as approved by the court or on a pro bono basis,

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or who is proceeding pro se, may move the court for a determination that he or she is indigent for costs and eligible for the provision of due process services, as prescribed by ss. 29.006 and 29.007, funded by the state.

- (i) A defendant who is found guilty of a criminal act by a court or jury or enters a plea of guilty or nolo contendere and who received due process services after being found indigent for costs under this subsection is liable for payment of due process costs expended by the state.
- 1. The attorney representing the defendant, or the defendant if he or she is proceeding pro se, shall provide an accounting to the court delineating all costs paid or to be paid by the state within 90 days after disposition of the case notwithstanding any appeals.
- 2. The court shall issue an order determining the amount of all costs paid by the state and any costs for which prepayment was waived under this section or s. 57.081. The clerk shall cause a certified copy of the order to be recorded in the official records of the county, at no cost. The recording constitutes a lien against the person in favor of the state in the county in which the order is recorded. The lien may be enforced in the same manner prescribed in s. 938.29.
- 3. If the attorney or the pro se defendant fails to provide a complete accounting of costs expended by the state and consequently costs are omitted from the lien, the attorney or pro se defendant may not receive reimbursement or any other form of direct or indirect payment for those costs if the state has not paid the costs. The attorney or pro se defendant shall repay the state for those costs if the state has already paid the

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costs. The clerk of the court may establish a payment plan under s. 28.246 and may charge the attorney or pro se defendant a one-time administrative processing charge under s. 28.24(26)(c).

Section 9. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 28.24, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, subsection (6) of section 57.082, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

57.082 Determination of civil indigent status.-

(6) PROCESSING CHARGE; PAYMENT PLANS.—A person who the clerk or the court determines is indigent for civil proceedings under this section shall be enrolled in a payment plan under s. 28.246 and shall be charged a one-time administrative processing charge under s. 28.24(26)(c). A monthly payment amount, calculated based upon all fees and all anticipated costs, is presumed to correspond to the person's ability to pay if it does not exceed 2 percent of the person's annual net income, as defined in subsection (1), divided by 12. The person may seek review of the clerk's decisions regarding a payment plan established under s. 28.246 in the court having jurisdiction over the matter. A case may not be impeded in any way, delayed in filing, or delayed in its progress, including the final hearing and order, due to nonpayment of any fees or costs by an indigent person. Filing fees waived from payment under s. 57.081 may not be included in the calculation related to a payment plan established under this section.

Section 10. This act shall take effect July 1, 2020.