

ALL RHODE ISLANDERS SHOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR DRIVER'S LICENSES

Rhode Island should make obtaining a driver's license accessible to our immigrant neighbors who have lived, worked and contributed to our communities for many years.

Legislation introduced by Representative Williams H7712 and Senator Ciccone S2416 would allow the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue an alternative ID driver's license to undocumented Rhode Islanders

Public Safety and Accountability: Our state's driver's license system provides an important public safety function. To gain a license, a driver must demonstrate basic knowledge of traffic laws, have good vision and pass a driving test. The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety reports that unlicensed drivers are almost five times more likely to be in a fatal accident than licensed drivers (1). This legislation will ensure there are more insured and licensed drivers on our roads.

Economic Participation and Opportunity: In Rhode Island, immigrants contribute an estimated total of \$31 million in taxes, including \$3.9 million in income taxes, \$17.6 million in sales taxes, and \$9.7 million in property taxes(2). Immigrants without access to driver's licenses restricted their activities at church and community groups and reduced their large consumer purchases(3). Allowing our immigrant neighbors to have a lawful driver's license will lead to more insured drivers and promote additional work hours or job changes that can improve the local and state economies. The Latino Policy Institute's comprehensive analysis of the effects of driver's licenses for undocumented found that these states have lower traffic fatalities, lower cost of car insurance, and declining poverty rates. **The Institute concludes that "issuing driver's licenses to undocumented Rhode Islanders will lead to safer roads and potentially better economic opportunities(4)."**

15 states have passed similar laws: As of December, 2019 fifteen states, as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, have enacted similar laws. Rhode Island should join the other New England states, Connecticut and Vermont, as well as California, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, New Mexico, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Utah, and Washington in passing driving licenses to undocumented residents(5).

Additional Information:

- Alternative ID driver's license is available as an alternative to REAL ID for anyone
- Alternative ID driver's license **DOESN'T** provide pathway to citizenship
- Alternative ID driver's license **ISN'T** a valid form of identification for federal or state voting purposes.
- Privacy protections included are the same as NY 'Green Light' Law that went into effect on 12/14/2019

1 High-Risk Drivers fact Sheet (AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety)

2 Lisa Gee, Matthew Gardner, Misha Hill, and Meg Wiehe, "Undocumented Immigrants' State & Local Tax Contributions" Institute on Taxation & Economic Policy, 2017. Misha Hill and Meg Wiehe, "State & Local Tax Contributions of Young Undocumented Immigrants" Institute on Taxation & Economic Policy, 2018.

3 Mary C. King, et al., Assessment of the Socioeconomic Impacts of SB 1080 on Immigrant Groups (Oregon Department of Transportation Research Section, June 2011), www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TP_RES/docs/reports/2011/sb1080.pdf.

4 A Legal and Policy Analysis of Drivers' Licenses for Undocumented Rhode Islanders, Roger Williams University School of Law and the Latino Policy Institute, June, 2016. https://www.rwu.edu/sites/default/files/downloads/lpi/drivers-license_report-legal.pdf

5 Mendoza, Gilberto. "States Offering Driver's Licenses to Immigrants." National Conference of State Legislatures, NCSL Immigrant Policy Project, 25 July 2019, www.ncsl.org/research/immigration/states-offering-driver-s-licenses-to-immigrants.aspx.