



ALL RHODE ISLANDERS SHOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR DRIVER'S LICENSES

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

Legislation introduced by Representative Williams HB5305 and Senator Ciccone SB190 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 drivers¹. This legislation will ensure that there are more insured and licensed drivers on our roads.

Economic Participation and Opportunity: In Rhode Island, undocumented immigrants contribute an estimated total of \$31 million in taxes, including \$3.9 million in income taxes, \$17.6 million in sales tax, and \$9.7 million in property tax². Allowing undocumented Rhode Islanders to have a lawful driver's license will not only lead to more insured drivers but will promote additional work hours and job changes that translate to more spending and investing in Rhode Island's local and state economies. Research has found that immigrants without access to driver's licenses restrict both their community engagement and their large consumer purchases³. Further, a comprehensive analysis by the Latino Policy Institute's found that states that have provided driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants have lower costs of care insurance, faster rates of declining poverty, and fewer traffic fatalities⁴. By passing this legislation, Rhode Island can create safer roads and experience better economic outcomes.

16 states have passed similar laws: As of February 2021, sixteen 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, Virginia, and Washington in passing driving licenses to undocumented residents.

Additional Information

- Alternative ID driver's license **DOES NOT** provide pathway to citizenship.
- Alternative ID driver's license **IS NOT** 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 & Economy 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.