

TALKING POINTS IN SUPPORT OF DRIVER'S LICENSE REVISIONS FOR IMMIGRANT WORKERS

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Background

- Like many immigrants before them, Ohio's most recent immigrants-- both documented and undocumented -- work in entry-level jobs, often doing the work that most citizens shun. In Ohio, many immigrants work in our fields, assembly lines, construction sites, fast food restaurants or homes. Most work hard, raise families and abide by the laws of our state and nation. In the past year, an OH statute was enacted which required individuals to provide a social security number or proof of legal residence when obtaining a driver's license. This statute made it impossible for undocumented immigrants and some legal refugees to get driver's licenses. The effect on the immigrant community of this state was devastating, but for the rest of Ohio's residents the change went unnoticed.
- We are proposing that the State of Ohio allow individuals without social security numbers to obtain driver's licenses if they provide other acceptable forms of identification such as a passport or consular ID or other recognized government registration documents. Ohioans for Licensed Drivers, a partnership of Ohio community, religious, business, and government organizations is determined that the passage of this legislation is in the interest of *all* Ohioans.

Why should Ohioans care?

- ***UNLICENSED DRIVERS ENDANGER EVERYONE.***
Many of those who are ineligible for licenses because of the SSN policy must nevertheless drive, for a variety of reasons – including escape from abusive situations, the need to obtain medical care, as well as school, work and business purposes. Receiving an Ohio driver's license ensures that all drivers learn proper driving techniques and laws. Without adequate testing a driver may never learn the rules of the road. Also, unlicensed drivers are far more likely to flee the scene of an accident.
- ***UNLICENSED DRIVERS RAISE INSURANCE RATES.***
Unlicensed drivers cannot obtain auto insurance. As the number of uninsured drivers in the state increases, so do insurance premiums for all Ohioans.
- ***CURRENT REQUIREMENTS HAVE CREATED A CRISIS FOR AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT SECTOR OF OHIO'S ECONOMY.***
- There are over 40,000 undocumented immigrants living in our state. Without legal access to driver's licenses, immigrant workers are impeded from getting to their jobs, undermining the economic stability of their families and the large number of Ohio businesses that depend on them. Our economy needs immigrant workers: With the baby boomer generation approaching retirement and the decrease in birth rates in the US over the years the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that the US will have a shortfall of at least 5 million workers by the year 2008. (Source: The Herald-Sun, Durham, NC: July 25, 2001). According to Congressional testimony "After the Baby Boomers turn 65, their flight to retirement will reach proportions so huge as, barring unforeseen increases in immigration and/or among the elderly, to reduce the total size of the nation's workforce. This shrinking workforce will greatly challenge employers and seriously threaten America's economic growth." It is clear that our economy depends on immigrant workers and will increasingly do so in the near future the existence of undocumented individuals in the United States is nothing more than a disconnect between immigration policy and economic reality.

Ohioans for Licensed Drivers

A statewide partnership of Ohio community, religious, business and government organizations supporting a more responsible driver's license policy encourages you to:

Support the efforts to improve the Driver's license requirements

REASON #1: THE DRIVER'S LICENSE PROPOSAL WOULD MAKE OUR ROADS SAFER

1. Unlicensed drivers have not been tested and thus are a potential danger to everyone.

This proposal ensures that many more drivers know the proper driving techniques and laws of the state, making our roads safer.

2. Unlicensed drivers raise insurance rates and are a hazard to us all.

Unlicensed drivers cannot obtain auto insurance. This proposal enables many more drivers to obtain auto insurance.

ACCORDING TO THE AAA FOUNDATION FOR TRAFFIC SAFETY, "AN UNLICENSED DRIVER IS 4.9 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE INVOLVED IN A FATAL CRASH THAN A DRIVER WITH A VALID LICENSE."

REASON #2: THE DRIVER'S LICENSE PROPOSAL WOULD MAKE OUR COMMUNITIES SAFER

1. Unlicensed drivers are difficult if not impossible to identify.

Currently immigrants without social security numbers are not eligible for state identification, and are therefore difficult if not impossible for law enforcement to identify and track. When police pull immigrants over on routine traffic stops, for example, individuals could give a different name each time.

2. Unlicensed drivers are not subject to background checks.

By allowing previously unlicensed individuals to obtain a driver's license they would be automatically put into a state database, allows police to determine whether the individual they are pulling over has been pulled over before, and whether there are outstanding warrants or other matters related to that suspect.

REASON #3: THE DRIVER'S LICENSE LAW WOULD ADD ADDITIONAL RESOURCES IN A TIME OF BUDGET CUTS

1. Unlicensed drivers cost our state money.

The proposal helps ensure that law enforcement resources, as well as the resources of the courts, are focused on the apprehension of dangerous criminals, instead of hard-working immigrants who want to drive legally but can't.

2. The proposal would provide our state much needed revenue.

Since a similar law went into effect in TN in May of 2001, the additional revenue to that state in driver's license processing fees alone has totaled over **\$900,000**.

3. Passing the proposed legislation could save the Department of Safety millions in administrative costs.

A recent study by the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles concluded that requiring proof of legal residency for driver's licenses in their state: ***"WOULD COST MORE THAN \$5.5 MILLION A YEAR TO CARRY OUT, AT A TIME WHEN THE AGENCY HAS BEEN LAYING OFF EMPLOYEES AND SHUTTING OFFICES TO SAVE MONEY."***

CURRENT NATIONAL PANORAMA

Currently NM, TN, MI and NC have lists of acceptable documents that include valid foreign issued governmental ID cards, allowing people to obtain a driver's license without a SSN or proof of legal residence. Other states are currently considering doing the same.