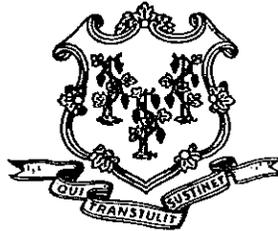


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March 4, 2013

Good evening Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero and members of the Transportation Committee. I would like to express my support for SB 68 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PROGRAM ALLOWING CERTAIN STATE RESIDENTS TO OBTAIN A DRIVER'S LICENSE OR VEHICLE REGISTRATION REGARDLESS OF CITIZENSHIP OR IMMIGRATION STATUS, SB 69, AN ACT ALLOWING ANY PERSON ACCEPTED INTO THE FEDERAL DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS PROGRAM TO OBTAIN A MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENSE, SB 628, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ISSUANCE OF DRIVERS' LICENSES TO CERTAIN IMMIGRANTS, and HB 6037, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ISSUANCE OF A MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENSE TO CERTAIN IMMIGRANTS.

The issue of offering Drivers' licenses to undocumented immigrants seems to create controversy wrought with emotion when a rational analysis of the issue would lead to a simple solution. There are approximately 11 million unauthorized immigrants

in the United States and approximately 120,000 in Connecticut<sup>1</sup>. It is likely that this estimate is low. Many of these residents are our neighbors and co-workers. Many of them perform vital functions in our communities. We all know that our nation's immigration law is broken; this is part of the reason we have so many residents who lack legal credentials. However, whatever may be your view on federal immigration policy going forward, these individuals are residents of our communities and the question we need to answer is what policies regarding these residents will best serve the goals of enhanced public safety and sound public policy. When the City of New Haven began to offer municipal ID cards to residents regardless of immigration status, there were all kinds of doomsday predictions about the negative effect the cards would have. Certain outside groups would have led people to believe that immigrants from all over the world were going to descend upon New Haven and use every service and clog every street. This clearly never happened. There may, however, be more residents with library cards now. These cards also increase public safety as they can be used to open bank accounts thus allowing card holders, who had not previously been able to open accounts, to carry less cash and so be less attractive to criminals.

Reliable transportation is a necessity in modern life and in some areas, automobiles are the only transportation available. The need to earn a living does not vanish just because a person does not have the appropriate immigration credentials. Most undocumented immigrants would like to operate vehicles within the law. We make

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/12/06/unauthorized-immigrants-11-1-million-in-2011/>  
<http://www.pewhispanic.org/2011/02/01/appendix-a-additional-figures-and-tables/>

this impossible by denying these residents access to drivers' licenses. Not only is driving itself illegal for them, but without a legal license, these drivers cannot purchase the required insurance. This dilemma not only leaves immigrant drivers unprotected in the case of accidents, but also increases the rates paid by all insurance customers due the increased use of the uninsured motorist coverage provision of the policies. In addition, by making drivers' licenses inaccessible to these residents, we do not allow them access to the appropriate training and we do not test their driving skills. This is dangerous. According to a California study, drivers without a valid license are nearly three times more likely to cause a deadly crash<sup>2</sup>. The public safety answer is clear.

I have also become aware of a method used by certain undocumented immigrants which allows them to purchase auto insurance but still denies them access to a drivers' license. If a person, regardless of immigration status, registers a business and that business purchases an automobile, the business can purchase insurance and obtain commercial registration plates. And while a corporation may be a person for the purpose of purchasing insurance, it is not a person for the purposes of driving. If we simply allowed undocumented immigrants to acquire drivers' licenses and thus insurance through regular means, we would also close down this peculiar industry that creates businesses for the sole purpose of purchasing insurance and registering commercial vehicles.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.dailynews.com/breakingnews/cj\\_22388951/dmv-unlawful-drivers-three-times-more-likely-cause#](http://www.dailynews.com/breakingnews/cj_22388951/dmv-unlawful-drivers-three-times-more-likely-cause#)

Ours is a nation of immigrants. It always has been and will continue to be. We need rational policies that assist these residents in becoming productive members of society. Three states, New Mexico, Washington, and Illinois already provide a method for immigrants to acquire drivers' licenses without regard to immigration status while Utah provides a two tier licensing system that allows some non-deferred action status immigrants to attain drivers' licenses. A number of other states, including Connecticut, provide a method for Deferred Action Status immigrants to receive drivers' licenses. I believe that the most rational policy for Connecticut would be to join New Mexico, Washington, and Illinois in allowing residents who can provide certain documents to become licensed drivers without regard to immigration status.

Thank you for hearing these important bills