

**Testimony of Carlos Candal before the Transportation Committee,
Monday, March 4th, 2013
Wilbur Cross High School, New Haven, CT**

Good evening State Senator Maynard, State Representative Guerrero, and all the honorable members of the Transportation Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly. My name Carlos Candal, I am a former board member of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC), an immigration attorney in Connecticut and longtime leader in the Latino Community in Connecticut, I am here today to speak in support of Proposed H.B. No. 6037 "An Act Concerning the Issuance of a Motor Vehicle Operator's License to Certain Immigrants," in support of Proposed Bill No. 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," and in support of Proposed S.B. No 69 "An Act Allowing Any Person Accepted into the Federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program To Obtain A Motor Vehicle Operator's License," and finally I am here to oppose proposed bill No. 643 "An Act Concerning Citizenship Status Verification Prior to the Issuance of a Driver's License."

As you heard from the testimony provided by LPRAC earlier today LPRAC conducted a yearlong study about the potential economic and public safety benefits for the State of Connecticut to issue driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants – A study which was conducted by the Priorities and Legislation Committee of LPRAC during the time that I was a board member of this organization and Chair of this Sub-Committee. LPRAC, at the time, was trying to research the potential economic & public safety benefits for the State of Connecticut to issue driver's licenses to all immigrants regardless of immigration status. We worked in collaboration with State Representative Juan Candelaria (95th District), Barbara Richards, a LPRAC Consultant, and our committee members Rick Cruz, Lourdes Montalvo, Isaias Diaz, Werner Oyanadel and I. The research involved included the review of pertinent data resources primarily from the Office of Legislative Research, committee meetings, and a fact finding hearing with interviews from executives from the State Department of Motor Vehicles, and the State Department of Public Safety. Finally, the committee received verbal and written testimony from a team of researchers conducting a similar research on this subject from Yale Law School.

It is within this context that the committee reported to LPRAC the conclusion of our preliminary investigation as follows: (1) there is a potential revenue benefit for the State of Connecticut by allowing Connecticut immigrants regardless of their immigration status obtain a driver's license and register their vehicle; (2) we found that the State would potentially receive nearly \$3 million

annually in license and registration fees; (3) the State of Connecticut, according to the Jerome N. Frank Legal Services Organization at Yale Law School, has the present legal authority under state and federal law to issue licenses to undocumented residents; and (4) we found that granting driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants would reduce the number of hit-and-runs and increase the number of insured motorists on the road and therefore increasing public safety for everyone in our state. (i.e., more than 14 percent of all accidents are caused by uninsured drivers, resulting in \$4.1 billion in insurance losses a year, according to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. It is our contention that Congress needs to fix our broken immigration system. However, while we wait for federal changes, state policymakers need to make sure that all their drivers are tested, licensed, and insured by implementing a policy that protects everyone's safety.

This issue is very important to me because we have significant anecdotal information that indicates that Connecticut immigrants are currently driving without licenses due in large part to their immigration status and inability to apply for licenses. The collateral effect of said restrictions forces immigrants to drive unlicensed and uninsured so they can work and support their families. This forces immigrants to risk major financial loss to themselves and the community at large and if continued, could result in higher insurance premiums for everyone. I strongly believe that it would benefit all state residents if immigrants were able to obtain motor vehicle driver's licenses. This would ensure that immigrants are tested on the laws of the road, have their vision checked, pay for licenses and car registration and most importantly purchase car insurance.

Thank you,