Testimony of the Honorable Migdalia Castro before the Transportation Committee, Monday March 4th, 2013
Wilbur Cross High School, New Haven, CT

Good evening State Senator Maynard, State Representative Guerrera, and all the honorable members of the Transportation Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly. My name Migdalia Castro, I am an official board member of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC), city councilwoman in the City of New Haven 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 and found that: (1) there is a potential annual revenue benefit of nearly $3 million in license and registration fees; (2) moreover, LPRAC found that granting driver's licenses to this population would also reduce the number of hit-and-runs and increase the number of insured motorists on the road and therefore improve public safety for people accessing our state and local road infrastructure; and (3) most importantly LPRAC found that Connecticut has the present authority under state and federal law to issue licenses to undocumented immigrants.

This issue is very important to many people in my community here in New Haven because many of our immigrant friends 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 make a lot of sense if all state residents regardless of immigration status were able to obtain motor vehicle driver's licenses to 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,