

Testimony of Therese LeFever

Good Evening:

My name is Therese LeFever and I am a leader in CONECT, representing St. James Roman Catholic Church in Stratford. I am here tonight to speak in favor of legislation which would allow undocumented immigrants to be issued a driver's license in CT.

From a financial standpoint it makes sense for our State to generate revenue through new registrations and licensing. From a safety standpoint, it makes sense to make sure everyone on the road has passed a driving test and is insured. And from a selfish standpoint it would be great to see my annual insurance premium reduced. These are, however, not the reasons I have chosen to speak up this evening.

I do not have a story to tell about my family being hit by an uninsured driver.

I do not have a story to tell about being racially profiled by a police department.

I do not even have a story to tell about needing to make difficult choices regarding when and how to get my children to the doctor appointments, school events, and extracurricular activities they need to go to.

I am a 49 year old white upper middle class American woman wanting to speak tonight because, regardless of what I do not have in common with undocumented immigrants, I stand in solidarity with my brothers and sisters who seek the same opportunities for their families as my grandparents sought for me. My Catholic tradition teaches we are one global family. Where one of my brothers or sisters needs refuge, I am to offer it. I am to welcome the stranger. The United States has likewise always stood as a beacon of hope for people seeking a better life or refuge for their families. Then we experienced the tragedy of 9/11, and since that day we have allowed our fears to make us less than welcoming to immigrants. We have villainized those who are here without documentation, even though our government has provided no legal path to citizenship.

So tonight I speak in favor of House Bill 6037 because it will generate at least 2 million dollars in driver's license fees and more in registration fees.

I speak in favor of House Bill 6037 because my insurance rate will have the potential to be reduced.

I speak in favor of House Bill 6037 because the roadways will be a safer place to be with drivers who have passed tests and are insured.

But mostly I speak in favor of House Bill 6037 because I very much want my brothers and sisters who are working in our country and paying taxes, going to our schools, shopping in our stores, and praying in our congregations to be able to live their life without fear. Until our federal government can work out a comprehensive immigration plan, this bill will help Connecticut be a safer place to live.

Thank you.