

People of Faith United for Justice

April 29, 2015

Madison WI

Support Driver Cards for Immigrants in Wisconsin

The Problem: In May 2005 the U.S. Congress passed the REAL ID Act, requiring all states to turn driver's licenses into a federal identification card. The REAL ID Act took effect in Wisconsin on April 1, 2007. Because driver's licenses now serve as federal identification cards, they require social security numbers. This has caused undocumented immigrants to no longer be able to obtain a driver's license or have any other legal way to drive a car.

The Solution: The federal REAL ID Act of 2005 allows individual states to create alternative driver cards for immigrants. These cards allow people the ability to drive but cannot be used for certain official federal purposes. A driver card is not a driver's license, but it would positively identify the card holder, ensure that driver education and tests were successfully completed, and allow a legal way for immigrants to drive to their jobs, school, church and shopping.

Passing Driver Card Legislation will:

- **Strengthen Wisconsin Families, Communities and Economy.** Immigrants make countless positive contributions to Wisconsin communities, schools, churches, economy, and culture. The Migration Policy Institute reports that there were about 76,000 undocumented immigrants living in Wisconsin in 2012; about 75 percent had been in Wisconsin for more than five years. The Selig Center for Economic Growth estimates the purchasing power of Hispanics in Wisconsin at \$7.2 billion.

Wisconsin's dairy industry contributes up to \$26.5 billion to our economy each year. Immigrants make up more than 40% of Wisconsin's dairy farm workforce and provide much of the labor in meat and other food processing plants. Immigrants in Wisconsin paid \$98.7 million in state and local taxes in 2010.

- **Increase Public Safety.** Licensing drivers based on ability to drive improves public safety. Driver cards will allow immigrants access to proper road safety, driving test, and to automotive insurance, resulting in safer roads and lower costs for insured drivers. The current climate of fear caused by lack of legal ability to drive erodes trust in local law enforcement preventing many immigrants from reporting if they are victims or witnesses to crimes or participating in investigations.

Law enforcement remains steadfast in their support for driver cards, because they will help to positively identify drivers on the street, allow law enforcement to focus on more important public safety matters, and will create better relations with residents in the community.

750 Windsor St #301 • Sun Prairie WI 53590 • 608-837-3108



Jewish Federation
OF MADISON



Jewish Community
Relations Council
MILWAUKEE
JEWISH FEDERATION



Passing Driver Card Legislation will:

- **Have a Positive Financial Impact on Wisconsin.** Insurance and automotive industries have lost the business of thousands of immigrants who no longer have licenses, and the state DMV has lost the financial contribution of people who are now denied access to its services. According to the Wisconsin Department of Administration Division of Executive Budget and Finance analysis, allowing driver cards will increase state revenue by \$3,000,000.

People of Faith support Driver Cards for Immigrants because:

- We want to live in a state in which values of community, safety, dignity, and family are upheld--not in a state in which people are profiled or constantly regarded with suspicion because of their race or ethnicity.
- We believe in the God-given dignity and infinite worth of each and every human life. The immigrants in our communities deserve access to job opportunities, groceries, health care, schools, faith communities and other relationships as they seek a full life for themselves and their families.
- We believe that we are all part of a sacred community. By providing driver cards to undocumented immigrants, our state can open up the opportunities for immigrants to develop and share their gifts. Allowing their fuller participation in community life will enrich us all.
- We believe in shared abundance. Immigrants live in our neighborhoods, and our state benefits from their labor and from the taxes they pay. Immigrants should not be deprived of freedom and safety, because they are not allowed the opportunity to drive legally.
- We believe that our faith calls us to work for justice and liberation. The establishment of driver cards will remove one piece of the inequity that results from our country's broken immigration policy. In the state of Wisconsin we can offer the freedom of travel, so that families can participate in community and daily life, while we continue to work for the greater justice of a reformed immigration policy at the national level.