LIMITED-USE LICENSES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Trained and Tested Drivers = Safer Road for Everyone

Providing a pathway for all immigrant motorists to obey driver's license laws will make everyone on our state's roads safer. These immigrant drivers need a path way to get tested on their driving skills and on the rules of the road, and purchase insurance. The danger of unlicensed drivers is that they have not received formal training on operating a motor vehicle and have not been tested to find out if they have the skills and ability to drive safely and have proper understanding of traffic regulations.

1. **KEEPING PEOPLE FROM ACCESSING LICENSES PREVENTS THEM FROM LEARNING THE RULES OF THE ROAD:**

   From 2007-2009 18.2% of all fatal car accidents in the US involved either unlicensed or invalidly licensed drivers.[1] When New Mexico extended licenses to undocumented residents in 2003, the percentage of fatal accidents dropped dramatically. From 2002-2010 fatal car crashes dropped by 30.6%, whereas nationally they only dropped by 23.2%.[2] By mandating drivers go to driving school and pass a driving test, we can insure that our entire driving population knows the rules of the road and lower the number of fatal car accidents.

   Unlicensed drivers who have caused an accident have no way to confirm their identity or share their basic information.

2. **UNLICENSED DRIVERS FLEE THE SCENE OF AN ACCIDENT:**

   Drivers without licenses who get into accidents are afraid of being arrested for driving illegally. Unfortunately, this fear makes it more likely that some unlicensed drivers will flee the scene of an accident before the police arrive.

   - When California's hit-and-run accidents increased by 19 percent from 2001 to 2003, law enforcement officers and traffic safety experts pointed "to an abundance of unlicensed drivers" and "drivers driving without auto insurance" as two of the reasons for the increase.[3]

   - Los Angeles Police Chief William Bratton stated in 2007, "It is my belief that by [granting undocumented immigrants driver's licenses] you would reduce the number of hit and runs and increase the number of insured motorists on the road. We would also now have undocumented immigrants' identifying information on record such as photographs and addresses which could prove helpful in the fight against crime and terrorism."[4]

---

[1] "Unlicensed to Kill," *AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety* (Washington, DC: AAA Foundation, Nov. 2011), p. 2.

[2] This data was calculated with the reports published by The National Highway Traffic Safety Administrations, found at http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/CMSWeb/listpublications.aspx?Id=E&ShowBy=DocType

[3] Michael Cabanatuan and Erin McCormick, "California's Hit-and-Run Crisis: More Flee Fatal Accidents Here Than in Any Other State," SAN FRANCISCO CRONICLE, July 27, 2003, www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2003/07/27/MN292165.DTL

[4] Former Commission of New York City Police Department and Current Chief of Los Angeles Police Department, William J. Bratton Supports Registering Immigrants: Measure Enhances Safety and Security" (New York Governor's Press Release, Oct. 22, 2007) www.ny.gov/governor/press/1022071.html

3. **MVA DATABASE AS A CRIME FIGHTING TOOL:**

    The MVA databases are routinely accessed by local law enforcement officers as an aid in both apprehending suspected criminals and finding potential witnesses. An officer using it can determine driving record, outstanding warrants, and current address. Access to this information can mean the difference between apprehending a dangerous criminal and simply letting him or her go.

4. **POLICE OFFICERS NEED CURRENT INFORMATION:**

    When police officers pull someone over, they need current information to verify their identity. A complete MVA database would enable officers to avoid unnecessarily taking individuals into custody and wasting valuable time and resources solely for the purpose of identifying the person.

5. **THE CURRENT BAN ON DRIVERS LICENSES FOR UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS INCREASES FEAR OF POLICE IN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES:**

    A trusting relationship between immigrant communities and the police is essential for prosecutors to obtain the information they need in order to combat crime.

6. **CLOGGING COURTS AND DIVERTING LAW-ENFORCEMENT RESOURCES**

    Denying licensure unnecessarily clogs courts and diverts scarce law-enforcement resources away from saving lives and preventing more serious crime. The over 275,000 undocumented immigrants in Maryland have continued to drive since the 2009 ban was put in place.[5] For obvious reasons, this ban has not prevented immigrants from picking up their kids at school, driving to their job, and accessing health care. Those caught driving without a license, however, has only added another burden to the already stressed law-enforcement departments.

    -

---

[5] As of 2010 the number of "unauthorized immigrants" in Maryland ranges from 200,000 to 325,000, with the 10th highest population in the country. See Jeffrey s. Passel and D,Vera Cohn, "Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010," *Pew Hispanic Center* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2011), p. 14.