

Strangers No Longer

A network of Circles of Support in Catholic parishes in Michigan, schools, and immigrant communities formed to support our immigrant neighbors and to advocate for a comprehensive and humane immigration policy. strangersnolonger.org - strangersnolonger11@gmail.com



Over 100,000 people can't legally drive in Michigan

A heartbreaking fact in Michigan: Over 100,000 undocumented men and women in our state work on our farms, restaurants, hotels, and in our manufacturing industry – but since 2007 we do not allow them to have driver's licenses or state ID cards because of their immigration status.

People can't legally drive to work, their children to school, or go to the grocery store. They don't have an acceptable ID at banks and pharmacies. Enrolling their children in school becomes a problem.

Think of the emotional trauma that comes from being treated as "less" or as a "societal problem" instead of as a person who contributes to our community and economy.

*We have a chance to correct this problem with the **Drive Safe bills**. (See below.)*

Why do people flee to the U.S. and why can't they become citizens?

- Migrants are fleeing their home countries because they have no choice. Central America has been ravaged by gang violence, drugs, severe drought, and corrupt governments. They have no alternative but to flee – even if it means struggling in the United States. Our immigrant leaders have told us countless stories of the harrowing trip they made through Central America – including being separated from their children at the border.
- For the vast majority, there is no pathway to citizenship in the US like there was for our grandparents. Our immigration system has been broken for many years with no hope in sight in our divided federal government. Even those who are involved in the legal process have to wait many years to get a court date all the while being unable to drive legally. The legal costs are unmanageable for many.

What are the Drive Safe bills?

Senate Bills – 265, 266, 267 and House Bills – 4410, 4411, 4412. These bills have been introduced in the legislature and slated to come out of committee in the fall. They would allow residents to obtain a driver's license or a state ID regardless of immigration status like it was before 2007. Currently 18 other states have adopted similar legislation.

- **The bills will give not give non-citizens the right to vote.** The Secretary of State has has a process that ensures non-citizens cannot go to a polling location and vote even if they have a driver's license or state ID.
- **These bills will improve Public Safety** by ensuring that all Michigan drivers have taken drivers' tests and have car insurance.
- **Community Safety will improve** because license and ID holders in immigrant communities are more likely to report/cooperate with investigations of crime.
- **And lastly, these bills are a matter of human dignity.** They will help ensure all our neighbors can take care of their families, get to work, and be part of their communities while waiting, sometimes years, for their day in court.

Who supports these bills?

- Michigan Farm Bureau,
- Michigan Catholic conference
- The Secretary of State and the Attorney General
- Many small business leaders who rely on undocumented workers in their businesses
- Many Michigan unions