



WASHTENAW COUNTY OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF



JERRY L. CLAYTON
SHERIFF

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MARK A. PTASZEK
UNDERSHERIFF

September 29, 2023

Re: Letter of Support for Driver's Licenses for Undocumented Immigrants

To whom it may concern:

I am in support of proposed legislation that would restore the ability for undocumented residents of the State of Michigan to obtain Michigan Driver's Licenses. The reasons why I am supportive of this restoration include increased public safety, economic development support and humanitarian concerns:

1. It makes the public safer when more of our residents take driver's license safety classes and pass the required tests that are designed to promote knowledgeable and safe driving.
2. It aids law enforcement and public safety to have police be able to identify accurately who they are dealing with when making a traffic stop or encountering people in the course of their duties. Having undocumented residents have drivers' licenses will help with that identification.
3. When more drivers are insured, it lowers over-all costs. It also helps to prevent situations where an uninsured driver is in an accident which puts a strain on the Uninsured Drivers Compensation fund.
4. Almost all undocumented people are in this country because they were in danger in their home country, wished to join family members in this country and are seeking a better life for themselves and their loved ones. Immigrants, documented and undocumented, commit fewer crimes than the general population. They wish to be law abiding, contributing members of our community. Giving them the opportunity to drive legally with insurance promotes obedience to the law.
5. Undocumented people in Michigan do have jobs and contribute to their local economies. Most work in low wage service jobs, such as agricultural, restaurant work and house cleaning/janitorial work which are not wanted by most citizens. These industries are dependent on these low wage workers. Allowing them to own vehicles, insure and drive them legally promotes employee reliability and access to jobs where public transportation is not readily available.
6. Many undocumented workers have been in this country for most of their lives. Some were brought here as children and know no other country, language or customs. They are here trying to live ordinary contributing lives, raising families and being good members of their communities. Because they cannot obtain Driver's Licenses they have to live in constant fear, when they go to pick up a child from school or go to the store for milk for a baby, that they may be arrested and then end up in the system, be deported and never go home again. Allowing people who wish to be law-abiding to be so and to take care of their families is the kind and humanitarian thing to do.
7. Undocumented residents were able to obtain driver's licenses and insurance for many years in Michigan and currently do so in multiple other states. The logistics are not prohibitive.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at claytonj@washtenaw.org.

Sincerely,

Sheriff Jerry L. Clayton