



WASHTENAW COUNTY

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To whom it may concern,

I write to provide my strong, enthusiastic, and unequivocal support for the Drive Safe package of bills in the Michigan Legislature.

Preliminarily, I want to emphasize the following: though nobody should drive without a license, the truth of the matter is that many people do. That is particularly true in Michigan, where driving is a virtual necessity for many residents to work, obtain basic necessities, and secure childcare. Towards that end, we should be doing everything possible to ensure that everybody who *can* drive safely is *licensed* to drive. That applies to citizens and noncitizens alike.

I therefore support the bills for three primary public-safety related reasons:

First, and perhaps most obviously, allowing more noncitizens to obtain driver's licenses will ensure that more drivers have passed a road test and understand our traffic safety laws. This is of course important to me as a prosecutor. But more fundamentally, it is important to me as a Michigan driver.

I drive in Michigan. My family drives in Michigan. My parents and loved ones drive in Michigan. And I want the drivers who are sharing the road with me—and my loved ones—to be licensed, and thus to have passed a road test and to understand traffic safety laws. These requirements for a license are there for a reason. They make *all* of us safer on the road. By allowing more noncitizens to get licenses, we can help to ensure that everyone who shares the road has cleared these basic hurdles.

Second, the Drive Safe package of bills will assist law-enforcement. They will reduce the possibility that a traffic stop will be prolonged in a potentially dangerous manner. As an initial matter, expanding the number of people who have driver's licenses will allow law-enforcement officers to more readily identify people—both people who are stopped for traffic violations, and people who are stopped otherwise and are carrying their licenses with them. That makes officers' jobs easier. It also reduces the possibility that a minor police encounter will need to be prolonged in order to identify a person.

Relatedly, ensuring that more drivers have licenses will reduce the number of police pursuits of vehicles. If a person is pulled over and lacks a license, it stands to reason that they will be more likely to attempt to flee, because driving without a license is a criminal offense.

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Justice, Justice, Shall You Pursue

Such pursuits can be dangerous to law-enforcement, the driver of the vehicle, and innocent bystanders alike. Any measure that can be taken to reduce the number of pursuits on our roadways should be pursued.

Third, the Drive Safe package of bills will allow more crimes—particularly vehicular crimes—to be solved and prosecuted. A noncitizen who lacks a license (but is nevertheless driving) may be more hesitant to report a crash in which they were the victim, fearful of being caught without a license. Even if such a crash is reported, the noncitizen may feel less comfortable moving forward as a witness in the subsequent case. That limits our ability to successfully prosecute drunk drivers. People who were driving recklessly. Those who engaged in a hit-and-run.

The same dynamic applies—perhaps to an even greater degree—to noncitizens who were not the *victims* of an offense, but witnessed a crime. Imagine, for example, that a noncitizen driving without a license witnesses a drive-by shooting on the freeway. That individual may be less likely to tell police what they know (or show up to testify in court proceedings) precisely because they were unable to obtain a license. After all: to tell the full story of how they came to witness the shooting, they would have to admit that they themselves were driving unlawfully.

By contrast, if all otherwise qualified noncitizens were able to obtain driver's licenses, such offenses would be more likely to be reported, solved—and successfully prosecuted.

In the final analysis, then, the Drive Safe package of bills will make all Michiganders—and all who share our roadways—much safer. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about my support for the Drive Safe bills.

Sincerely,



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