

GREEN LIGHT NY: Driving Together



RECOMMENDATION

New York State should restore equal access to driver's licenses by passing **legislation S01747/A03675** to ensure that New York's **"Standard Licenses" be accessible to all state residents, regardless of immigration status.**

Twelve states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have passed similar legislation, including **Vermont and Connecticut.**

COMMUNITY NEED

- **752,000 undocumented immigrant New Yorkers over the age of 16** are currently barred from obtaining driver's licenses due to their immigration status. In addition, over 70,000 New Yorkers that currently have TPS or DACA are at risk of losing their access to driver's licenses.
- Without access to licenses, **immigrants are unable to register and insure their vehicles, obtain and carry valid identification, nor build trust with police.**
- Unlicensed **immigrants often risk driving because they lack reasonable public transportation alternatives** and must travel to meet their basic daily needs such as school, worship, and work.
- Immigrants without valid identification or permission to drive **fear simple interactions with police**, such as a traffic violation, will put them at **risk of arrest and deportation.** This leads to avoiding police, even when they are a victim or witness of a crime.

OPPORTUNITY

Standard driver's licenses will make New York roads & communities safer for everyone

- Licensing undocumented immigrant drivers ensures that **they can be properly licensed, informed of traffic laws, pass a driving test, and operate a registered, inspected and insured vehicle.** Since New Mexico changed its policy in 2003, the State's rate of uninsured motorists fell from 33% to under 9%.
- Allowing access to licenses will **improve trust between law enforcement and immigrant communities.** With **valid, legal identification**, witnesses and victims of crimes will more readily report and cooperate with police. Police will be able to **verify the identity of motorists and review their traffic records, allowing police to fulfill their duties more efficiently and effectively.**

Standard driver's licenses will strengthen and grow New York's economy

- New York State and County governments will receive an estimated **\$57 million in combined annual revenue, and \$26 million in one-time revenue** through taxes and fees, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute.
- Licensing undocumented immigrant drivers will help **lower insurance premiums for all residents**, by a moderate estimate of \$17 per person each year, which collectively saves motorists millions of dollars annually.
- New York State's **economy will receive a boost** as workers overcome barriers to transportation that prevent them from reaching improved job options and **increase their discretionary income.**

Standard driver's licenses will promote community integration and financial inclusion

- Access to driver's licenses will allow undocumented immigrants to drive to work, worship, school, and in emergencies without the increased risk of arrest and deportation. Previously fearful undocumented community members will be more likely to **participate in and contribute to local community life.**
- With State issued identification, unbanked immigrant New Yorkers will have **the opportunity to financially integrate into the formal banking system** and build their family's savings and economic security.

For general information or to be connected with an organization leading the campaign in your region, contact:

New York Immigration Coalition at (212) 627-2227 or mzaldivar@nyic.org

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