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Res. No. 659

Resolution supporting the use and acceptance of the Mexican Consulate's Matrícula Consular identification card by the city of New York as valid identification for Mexican immigrants living in the United States.

By Council Members Lopez, Palma, Clarke, Dilan, Gennaro, Martinez, Monserrate, Quinn and Seabrook

Whereas, According to the 2002 Current Population Survey, 9.8 million of the 32.5 million foreign born persons residing in the United States are Mexican immigrants, including hundreds of thousands who live and work in New York City; and

Whereas, Many of the estimated 5.3 million undocumented Mexican immigrants who live in the United States lack a valid identification card, which prevents them from participating in everyday activities and leaves them susceptible to crime; and

Whereas, Like many other consulates around the world, the Mexican Consulate has issued identification cards to Mexican citizens who reside outside of Mexico for many years to identify, locate and provide services

and resources for persons living abroad; and

Whereas, In order to obtain this identification card, known as a “Matrícula Consular,” an applicant must pay a small fee and present an original birth certificate that demonstrates Mexican citizenship, an additional document that includes a photograph and demonstrates identity, and proof of residency such as a utility bill; and

Whereas, The most recent version of the Matrícula Consular includes the name, photograph, signature, place and date of birth of the cardholder, the cardholder’s current residence in the United States, a serial number, date of expiration and numerous security features that protect against tampering and fraud; and

Whereas, The Matrícula Consular is increasingly used by Mexican immigrants living in the United States as proof of residence and identity; and

Whereas, There is currently a debate in the United States at the local, state and federal levels of government regarding whether and under what circumstances the Matrícula Consular should be accepted as proof of identity; and

Whereas, According to the Mexican Embassy, as of July 2004 the Matrícula Consular was used as identification for various purposes in 33 states and 377 cities nationwide; and

Whereas, Current federal regulations issued by the United States Treasury Department in May 2003 and updated in September 2003 allow the use of the Matrícula Consular as proof of identity to open a bank account and the Mexican Consulate in New York City estimates that the card is accepted at 150 financial institutions across the country; and

Whereas, In accepted locations, the Matrícula Consular can also be used to obtain a library card, cash a check, demonstrate age to enter a bar, enter a government or high security building, obtain a marriage license, apply for a birth or death certificate, or obtain telephone or utility services; and

Whereas, At least 12 states, including Delaware, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, New Mexico, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin currently accept the Matrícula Consular as valid identification to obtain a driver’s license; and

Whereas, While the New York City Police Department has declined to recognize or accept the Matrícula Consular, the Mexican Consulate reports that approximately 940 police departments nationwide accept the card, including Los Angeles, Houston and Chicago; and

Whereas, The use of the Matrícula Consular enables police departments to more easily and efficiently identify suspects, witnesses and victims of crimes, which saves valuable time and resources; and

Whereas, Possessing a legitimate identification card could empower persons to report crimes, human rights abuses and labor violations; and

Whereas, The Matrícula Consular is for identification purposes only and does not contain any information regarding immigration status or affect immigration status; and

Whereas, The Mexican Embassy performs background checks before issuing cards and has compiled consular data in a national database to help prevent the issuance of duplicate cards and identity theft; and

Whereas, Prohibiting the use of the Matrícula Consular as valid identification in the United States would further marginalize millions of undocumented immigrants living, working and contributing to communities nationwide; and

Whereas, Accepting the Matrícula Consular as valid identification for persons who otherwise might not be easily identified benefits both immigrant communities and government institutions, making all communities safer; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the city of New York supports the use and acceptance of the Mexican Consulate's Matrícula Consular identification card by the city of New York as valid identification for Mexican immigrants living in the United States.

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