



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 116

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass legislation which would allow undocumented immigrants to obtain a driver's license regardless of their immigration status.

By Council Members Rodriguez, Chin, Reynoso, Torres, Rosenthal and Mendez

Whereas, According to the Pew Hispanic Center, in 2012, New York State was home to approximately 800,000 undocumented immigrants, many of whom call New York City their home; and

Whereas, Undocumented immigrants face many obstacles tied to their lack of status, including the fact that undocumented immigrants are prohibited from obtaining a New York State driver's license; and

Whereas, Many undocumented immigrants need to drive, whether it is for work, to take their children to school, or for other important appointments; and

Whereas, Regardless of the particular reason, driving is necessary for many undocumented immigrants to conduct their daily activities; and

Whereas, According to a 2011 nationwide report by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, unlicensed drivers are five times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash compared to their licensed counterparts; and

Whereas, According to the same report, in 2011 unlicensed drivers caused 5,444 fatalities and injured 1,493 individuals nationwide; and

Whereas, To ensure road safety and accountability, New York State's Department of Motor Vehicles should provide qualified undocumented immigrants with driver's licenses regardless of their immigration status; and

Whereas, To date, eleven states allow undocumented immigrants to obtain drivers licenses, including New Mexico, Utah, Oregon, Nevada, Illinois, Washington, Maryland, Vermont, Colorado, Connecticut, and

California; and

Whereas, As for New York, despite the introduction of several pieces of legislation in the New York State Legislature and the wide support of such legislation from several New York City advocacy groups, including Make the Road New York, none have been enacted; and

Whereas, Passing a bill that grants driver's licenses to qualified undocumented immigrants is in the best interest of all New Yorkers because immigrants wanting to drive legally will have to pass written and practical driver's exams, register their vehicles, and obtain automobile insurance; and

Whereas, Allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain driver's licenses will improve public safety by ensuring that everyone driving has been properly educated and tested and is operating a registered, inspected, and insured vehicle; and

Whereas, Allowing undocumented immigrants the opportunity to obtain a driver's license will mean increased revenue for the State from license and registration fees and may lead to lower auto insurance premiums for all New Yorkers; and

Whereas, Immigrants with drivers licenses will more easily integrate into their communities which is beneficial to all New Yorkers; now, therefore, be it,

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass to pass legislation which would allow undocumented immigrants to obtain a driver's license regardless of their immigration status.

JSM
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