

# Strangers No Longer

*Michigan Drivers License Campaign Kickoff*



*February 8, 2020*

# ***Michigan Drivers License Initiative***

## ***What is it?***

---

- ***Introduced:*** October of 2019 to the Michigan legislature.
  - Senate bills 631 and 632
  - House bills 5192 and 5193.
- **These bills are called the Drive SAFE plan**, short for Safety, Access, Freedom, and the Economy.

**These bills allow any person who meets age requirements and can prove Michigan residency obtain a state identification card or apply for a driver's license, including immigrants living in Michigan without legal permission.**

*The right to get a drivers license without proof of citizenship was allowed in Michigan until it was rescinded in 2008 by the Attorney General of Michigan. The Michigan legislature then passed legislation that codified this into law.*

# ***Michigan Drivers License Initiative***

## ***Why is it Important?***

---

- **An Issue of Human Dignity**

- Allowing drivers licenses helps ensure all our neighbors are able to take care of their family, get to work, and be part of their community. Immigrants often wait years for their day in court
- Groups who stand to benefit include DACA recipients, undocumented immigrants, and legal immigrants who haven't received their verification documents because of bureaucratic delays.

- **Improve Public Safety**

- Ensuring that Michigan drivers have taken drivers' tests and have car insurance would be a benefit to all of us.
- According to AAA, unlicensed drivers are five times more likely to get into fatal car crashes.
- Increased traffic safety knowledge will decrease accidents, hit and runs, and those who flee due to lack of license / insurance.
- After New Mexico passed this policy traffic fatalities fell 23%.

- **Agriculture Benefits to the State of MI (supported by the MI Farm Bureau)**

- The approximately 150,000 undocumented residents in Michigan play a large role in the farming, auto, service and manufacturing industries. By allowing this workforce to lawfully drive to and from work, they will be better workers by arriving to work consistently and on time.
- With 15 other states offering drivers licenses to those unable to prove legal presence, Michigan is increasingly losing the competition for workers.
- Apple growers and others have reported increased shortages in available labor due to Michigan's 2008 policy change.

# ***Michigan Drivers License Initiative***

## ***Why is it Important (continued)?***

---

- **Improve Community Safety**

- License and ID holders in immigrant communities are more likely to report/cooperate with investigations of crime.
- Reduces production/sale of fraudulent documentation.
- A stronger drivers license database can benefit law enforcement
- Forcing those who can't open a bank account because of lack of photo ID to carry cash makes them more likely to be targets of crime.

- **Potential Economic Benefits to the State of Michigan**

- Without valid licenses, people are prevented from participating in economic activities that are both essential to a stable home as well as beneficial to the Michigan economy.
- Michigan League for Public Policy predicts \$13.5 million in revenue over the first 3 years in new licenses and vehicle purchases.
- Auto insurance premiums could decrease. An auto insurance pool widened by relicensed and newly licensed drivers because of this legislation could help to hold down premium costs for all Michiganders.

# ***Michigan Drivers License Initiative***

## ***Who Supports It? – The Michigan Catholic Conference*** ***(along with 32 other organizations across the state)***

---

**Comments of Tom Hickson, Michigan Catholic Conference Vice President for Public Policy, September 20, 2019, Steps of Michigan State Capitol:**

“Transportation is vital to nearly every aspect of life, and to have good transportation access, you need a driver’s license. The inability to obtain a license makes life’s most basic functions extremely difficult. Most of us take for granted life’s routine tasks, such as driving to work, going to a doctor’s appointment, taking a child to school, going to church, or picking up groceries.

For many of residents of this state, these types of tasks can be a great risk. I’ll give you a few examples:

- The factory worker trying to get to work to earn a living and pay taxes.
- The young couple who is trying to get to their child to a school.
- Picking up a child from day care or taking one to a doctor.

All of these situations require a driver’s license. ***Prohibiting individuals from gaining access to a driver’s license robs them not only of their human dignity but it also hurts the community.***

A driver’s license allows a person to work, to take care of their children, to buy necessary goods and to contribute to our tax revenue. Those that do not have a driver’s license must find other means of transportation, which often is not reliable. For those undocumented individuals that choose to drive, they do so at a great risk to themselves and others. As these individuals will not have access to driver’s training, they could pose a greater traffic safety threat than drivers who do have access to training.

***For these reasons, the Michigan Catholic Conference is proud to stand here today to discuss this issue and looks forward to a robust discussion on this important human dignity issue in the Michigan Legislature.”***

# ***Michigan Drivers License Initiative***

## ***What is the Status of These Bills?***

---

In today's political climate, this issue is divided along party lines. Democrats support these bills, Republicans are against them.

Because the Republicans have the majority in both legislative bodies, the bills are currently stuck in committee. The Republican chairs of these committees control what bills come up for debate. **Essentially the Drive SAFE bills are stuck in committee unless we can apply substantial political pressure.**

- The Senate bills are with the Senate Committee on Government Operations chaired by Sen Mike Shirkey (R) – Branch, Hillsdale, and Jackson counties
- The House bills are with the House Committee on Transportation, chaired by Rep. Jack O'Malley (R) – Leelanau, Benzie, Manistee and Mason counties.
- Neither committee has them scheduled for hearings at this time...

# Michigan Drivers License Initiative Strategy

January

Meet with the MI Senator and Representative from your district.

Strategy Under Development

March

Start a letter writing campaign in your Parish

June

Work with SNL to partner with other organizations who support these bills.

Fall 2020

Support candidates who support immigrant rights in MI.

More SNL circles are needed to aid in the ongoing strategy development. If you are interested, contact Rich Faba at 248-961-3246 or [strangersnolonger11@gmail.com](mailto:strangersnolonger11@gmail.com)

# ***How to Meet Your Representatives***

---

1. Find out who your State senator and House representative is:  
State senator: <https://www.senate.michigan.gov/fysbyaddress.html>  
State representative: <https://www.house.mi.gov/mhrpublic/frmFindaRep.aspx>
2. Set up a meeting:
  1. Invite legislator to a meeting at your parish
  2. Arrange for a meeting at your legislator's office
  3. Attend the legislator's coffee hour
3. What to say: "Hello, I am Jane Smith from xxx Parish in your district. We are a part of Strangers No Longer which is an organization dedicated to providing assistance to immigrants in our area and to advocate for a comprehensive and humane immigration policy. We live in the member's district and would like to meet with him/her to discuss the Drive SAFE bills."
4. Prepare for the meeting:
  - Be ready to talk about the economic and public safety aspects of these bills. The humanitarian angle will not be as effective.
  - SNL Michigan Drivers License Taskforce has an information packet to share with you.
  - The SNL Taskforce is willing to meet with you to help prepare.

**Important:** Let the SNL MI Drivers License Taskforce know that your meeting plans. They will be maintaining an overall SNL advocacy log of which state house and senate members have been contacted. ( [strangersnolonger11@gmail.com](mailto:strangersnolonger11@gmail.com) )



# The Flow of the Meeting

---

- 1. Present your team:** *member names & parishes, connection with other SNL parishes and with Michigan Catholic Conference, who is spokesperson for the group, how much time do we have with you.*
- 2. Describe the problem:**
  - *Thousands driving without license (work, medical, school)*
  - *Lack of valid ID the work load of local police*
  - *Law abiding families now hiding, not reporting crime, not attending church.*
  - *Without valid licenses, people are prevented from participating in economic activities that are both essential to a stable home as well as beneficial to the Michigan economy.*
  - *Lack of a hearing in legislature = loss of democracy. Committee Chair can block a hearing.*
- 3. Present the solution:** *Senate bills 631 and 632 and House bills 5192 and 5193 are called the Drive SAFE plan, short for Safety, Access, Freedom, and the Economy. These bills allow any person who meets age requirements and can prove Michigan residency obtain a state identification card or apply for a driver's license, including immigrants living in Michigan without legal permission.*

*The Senate bills are with the Senate Committee on Government Operations, the House bills are with the House Committee on Transportation.*
- 4. Present Our Demand:** *We are sending a letter to each of the committee chairs (Sen Mike Shirkey, Rep. Jack O'Malley) asking that these bills be put up for debate in committee. Will you co-sign our letter? This is an issue of democracy.*
- 5. If yes:** *Great....can we invite you to speak to our congregation to announce why you are asking the committee chair to hold a hearing?*

**If no: Negotiate:** *Will you send your own letter asking for "Democracy," i.e., asking for a hearing, and copy us?*
- 6. Summarize the meeting, thank them for their time.**

# Driver's Licenses For Michigan's Undocumented Immigrants FAQ's

---

## 1. Why should Michigan extend driving privileges to the undocumented immigrants?

- Giving the opportunity to obtain driver's licenses to the undocumented immigrants makes good public policy sense.
- The required driver's license training and testing make the undocumented better drivers and improve road safety for everyone. For example, a 2016 study found fewer traffic fatalities on average in states that do not restrict driving based on immigration status.

## 2. What are the revenue implications of extending driver's licenses to the undocumented for Michigan?

- An estimated 55,000 new driver's licenses will be issued, 20,000 vehicles will be purchased, resulting in \$13.5 million in revenue in the first 3 years.
- In addition, \$12 million in annual revenue will be generated from sales and gas taxes, resulting in \$100 million in revenue over 10 years.

## 3. What will happen to our auto insurance premiums if we allow the undocumented to obtain driver's licenses?

- Current drivers will see a modest decrease by \$20 in their annual auto insurance premiums due to an increased pool of drivers.
- A study has shown that the average auto insurance costs are lower in states that allow the undocumented to obtain driver's licenses than in states that do not.

## 4. What does allowing driver's licenses for the undocumented mean for Michigan's economy?

- Michigan's \$100 billion agricultural industry needs workers with reliable transportation. An estimated 5% of the state's undocumented work in this industry. The Michigan Farm Bureau endorses driver's licenses for the undocumented.
- With reliable transportation, the undocumented will be able to secure better jobs, work more hours, travel farther to meet employers' labor needs and purchase goods and services. All that will mean more tax revenue for Michigan.

## 5. Will driver's licenses allow the undocumented to vote?

- No, as opposed to Real ID-compliant licenses which require proof of lawful status, future standard driver's licenses extended to the undocumented cannot serve any federal purposes or allow the undocumented to vote.

## 6. If the undocumented have never been allowed to drive in Michigan, why should we set a precedent?

- In fact, the undocumented were allowed to obtain driver's licenses in Michigan prior to 2008. The removal of that privilege resulted from a change in the Attorney General's opinion at the time.
- Along with the District of Columbia, 15 other states already allow the undocumented to obtain driver's licenses: CA, CO, CT, DE, HI, IL, MD, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OR, UT, VT, WA.

## 7. What other non-citizen groups are already allowed to drive in Michigan?

- Permanent residents (green card holders), international students, international nationals with work permits, tourists with a valid foreign driver's license from a treaty country along with an international driving permit or a translation of the license with a color photo.

## 8. Why do the undocumented immigrants need driver's licenses in Michigan?

- In the absence of accessible, reliable public transportation 7 days a week year-round, the undocumented immigrants need to drive to work, school, church, medical appointments, grocery-shopping, and purchase goods and services out of their immediate areas.

### Sources:

Michigan Immigrant Rights Center. "Immigrants and Michigan Driver's Licenses: Past, Present, and Future." (2018)

Simon Marshall-Shah. "Taking Our Foot Off the Brakes: Why Driver's Licenses For All Makes Sense". Michigan League for Public Policy (2019)