



## GREEN LIGHT NY: Driving Together

**Goal:** 750,000 undocumented immigrant New Yorkers over the age of 16 are currently barred from obtaining driver's licenses due to their immigration status. New York State should restore equal access to driver's licenses by passing legislation to expand access to the “Standard License.” This legislation, S01747/A03675 (the Driver License Access and Privacy Act), would establish that the newly created “Standard License” be accessible to all NY residents.

### NY Licensing Laws are Lagging Behind. There's Precedent for this Change.

- New Yorkers were able to get driver's licenses, regardless of immigration status, until 2002, in an unwarranted response to the 9/11 attacks, then-Governor George Pataki changed the law to require motorists to have a social security number in order to obtain a driver's license—ultimately resulting in more than 1,500,000 drivers losing their licenses.
- There are 12 states, in addition to Puerto Rico and our nation's capital, Washington DC, that already provide access to licenses for all residents, regardless of immigration status, including California, Illinois, and our neighboring states of Connecticut and Vermont.

### Life Changing for Undocumented Immigrants.

- Undocumented New Yorkers are being denied access to driver's licenses that they urgently need to drive to work, buy groceries, take their children to school, travel to appointments, attend religious worship, or take family members to hospitals in case of emergencies.
- Many New Yorkers who cannot obtain driver's licenses because of their immigration status live in fear that they will be arrested during a routine traffic stop. Because they do not have a driver's license, such an encounter with law enforcement makes them vulnerable to deportation and having their families torn apart.

### This is a Public Safety Issue. Better Trained Drivers, Safer Vehicles, Fewer Hit & Runs.

- Licensing undocumented drivers would make our roads safer. Immigrant drivers would need to pass a driving test, learn the rules of the road, register and operate an insured vehicle.

- Since New Mexico changed its policy in 2003, their rate of uninsured drivers fell from 33% to less than 9%.
- William Bratton — who served as police commissioner in both Los Angeles and New York — has supported such measures, saying they would reduce the number of hit-and-runs, increase the number of insured motorists and, by having identification on record, help fight crime and terrorism.
- Drivers will be more likely to stay at the scene of an accident to aid police and emergency workers and to exchange insurance information with other affected motorists.

### **Economic Benefits: \$60+ Million in Cash Flow to NY State & Lower Insurance Premiums for All New Yorkers.**

- New York State would experience \$57 million in annual state and county revenue in registration fees, sales taxes, and gas taxes; \$26 million in one-time revenues as more people obtain licenses, buy cars, and register vehicles; \$8.6 million in annual revenue to the MTA from New York City, Long Island, and Lower Hudson surcharges to car registration, gas tax and sales tax; and \$2.2 million in one-time revenue from the driver's licenses surcharge.
- As more drivers get insured, the number of accidents involving uninsured motorists will decline. The costs of such accidents – and the premiums to cover them – will decline, and insurance rates will fall for everyone. In Illinois, for example, it is estimated that if only half of the state's 250,000 unlicensed immigrant residents got licensed and insured, Illinois policyholders would save \$46 million per year in premium payments.

### ***If an undocumented licensed driver is pulled over, are they at risk to get deported?***

- Records supplied by someone applying for a driver's license are restricted (though subject to subpoena and judicial warrant), but these do not include other records, such as traffic violations, that are supplied by courts and law enforcement agencies themselves. A police officer making a traffic stop could still check the record of violations of the individual driver in question. But no law enforcement agency could run a "fishing expedition" over an entire database in order to search for possible immigration violations.

### **What Does the Opposition Say?**

While there is very little organized opposition, main pushback comes from an overstatement and misconception of the rights an undocumented immigrant gains by getting a standard issue driver's license. Possession of a standard license cannot be legally used as evidence of a holder's immigration or citizenship status; it will not automatically register anyone to vote, nor is it valid for any other federal purposes. A Standard License is not valid for federal identification purposes and cannot be used to board an airplane or enter federal buildings.

## ACTION STEPS

---

Call or write a letter to Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins (518-455-2585). Contact your Senator. <https://www.nysenate.gov/find-my-senator>.

Join us in writing and sending post cards on **Friday, May 31<sup>st</sup>** at Central Synagogue before Shabbat services.

*Script for Call / Letter to Senator:*

*My name is (YOUR NAME) and I am from (YOUR CITY OR TOWN) and am a member of Central Synagogue. I am one of the thousands of residents who support expanding access to licenses for undocumented New York residents. This will make our roads safer and keep families together. The bill number is S01747 / A03675. This bill is important to me because (REASON YOU SUPPORT LICENSES). Our community cannot wait any longer, I urge you to sign on as a co-sponsor and take action to pass A03675/S01747 as soon as possible. Can we count on you to support expanded access to driver's licenses?*

## RELEVANT REFERENCES

---

<b>Organization Name</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Website</b>
Labor-Religion Coalition of NY	518-213-6000, ext. 6176	<a href="http://laborreligion.org">laborreligion.org</a>
Workers Center NY	315-218-5708	<a href="http://workerscny.org">workerscny.org</a>
Green Light New York	212-627-2227 ext. 230	<a href="http://greenlightnewyork.org">greenlightnewyork.org</a>
NY Immigration Coalition	212-627-2227	<a href="http://nyic.org">nyic.org</a>
RAC-NY	202-387-2800	<a href="http://rac.org/NY">rac.org/NY</a>
Upstate Network for Immigration Rights		<a href="mailto:unir.ny@gmail.com">unir.ny@gmail.com</a>