

April 10, 2017

Dear Real ID Conference Committee Members:

The Minnesota Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Minnesota, writes to ask that, as you conferee HF 3 (REAL ID), you not include the language regarding “lawful status” contained in the House version of the bill. Now that Governor Dayton has stated it would take legislative action to make changes in this area, the inclusion of this language not only creates a partisan impasse for compromise on Real ID, it will also further damage any dialogue around the possibility of future legislation that would allow undocumented persons to obtain provisional driver’s licenses.

Keeping the door open for future compromise on legislation for immigrant driver’s licenses will allow Minnesota to take action where our federal government has failed, and will show our immigrant brothers and sisters that they are not legislatively confined to the shadows and margins of our society. We are not going to deport *en masse* undocumented persons, so we need to consider concrete ways in which we can bring them into greater participation in our society. Absent federal comprehensive immigration reform, offering driver’s licenses is one small measure the state of Minnesota can employ that will make our roads safer and our communities more welcoming to the immigrants who already make important contributions to our economic, cultural, and social life.

Access to driver’s licenses will help immigrants meet their daily obligations. In many parts of Minnesota, there is no public transportation, and undocumented persons have no ability to get to work, church, health services, or school, other than by driving illegally. Every day, they live in fear that getting stopped could mean permanent separation from their children, spouse, or parents.

Providing driver’s licenses to immigrants also serves the common good through reasonable public policy—it is surely in the best interests of our state to have people who are living among us and driving on our roads be able to do so safely and legally.

We understand that immigration policy and immigrant driver’s licenses are complicated and contentious issues. But we ask that you do not include this language, which is unnecessary for the legislative intent of the Real ID bill. We also ask that you work toward compromise legislation that can protect the poor and vulnerable as well as create safer, more welcoming communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully yours,

Shawn M. Peterson  
Associate Director for Public Policy  
[speterson@mncatholic.org](mailto:speterson@mncatholic.org)