

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-3213**

April 8, 2019

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
New York State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins  
Majority Leader, New York State Senate  
New York State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

The Honorable Carl E. Heastie  
Speaker, New York State Assembly  
New York State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, and Speaker Heastie,

As the first formerly undocumented immigrant to serve in the United States Congress, I would like to voice my enthusiastic support for a measure that would allow New York State to issue driver's licenses to individuals irrespective of their immigration status. New York has an opportunity to make this critical change legislatively, joining a dozen other states, as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. I strongly believe such a change would result in important benefits not only for undocumented residents, but for all New Yorkers.

First and most important is safety. Under the current system, many undocumented individuals are forced to drive without a license to carryout basic needs like getting to work or taking their kids to school, meaning they may have not received the proper training or passed the necessary tests to ensure they are able to drive safely. Other experts have also pointed out that changing this policy would reduce the number of hit-and-runs because undocumented immigrants involved in an accident would not be in fear of deportation due to driving without a license. In fact, a 2017 study by Stanford University attributed a seven percent drop in hit-and-runs in California to that state's change in its driver's license law.

In addition to safety, New Yorkers stand to enjoy considerable economic benefits. According to the Fiscal Policy Institute (FPI), the influx of one-time driver's license and vehicle registration fees could bring the state as much as \$24 million. It would also bring recurring annual revenues of \$28 million to the state and \$21 million to local jurisdictions. That funding would go to critical needs throughout the state that all residents can enjoy. Yet, perhaps the most important takeaway from FPI's economic analysis is the impact it would have on driver's wallets. According to their study, drivers stand to save an estimated \$17 per year on their auto insurance policies due to the improved safety conditions that would result from providing licenses to all residents regardless of status.

Finally, and just as important, is fairness. Just like anyone else, immigrants need the ability to drive in order to carry out daily tasks. What's more, many individuals have petitioned for an immigrant visa, undergone a background check, and had that petition approved, but are waiting in a years-long line for their visa. They are just as impacted by the current policy, placing an undue burden on prospective immigrants as well as undocumented New Yorkers. And, as outlined above, the current policy places unnecessary safety and economic burdens on all New Yorkers.

Due to the evidence witnessed in the many other states that have already implemented this policy, I believe it is long past time for New York to take this important step and begin issuing driver's licenses to all residents irrespective of immigration status. I look forward to continuing to work with you on making this policy change a reality.

Sincerely,



Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress