



RECOMMENDATION
COMMISSION ON IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS
20130513-004D

Regarding Pending State Legislation on Texas Resident Driver Permit
City of Austin, Texas

WHEREAS, the City of Austin and Travis County have significant diverse immigrant populations and welcome them in our city and county; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2010 U.S. Census approximately 18% of residents are foreign-born, and

WHEREAS the City of Austin and Travis County are committed to public safety by ensuring that all drivers in the state of Texas are licensed pursuant to state law and,

WHEREAS the City of Austin and Travis County encourage all drivers to aid at the scene of an accident, to prevent the abandonment of the scene of an accident, and to prevent uninsured use of a motor vehicles,

WHEREAS the City of Austin and Travis County recognize that it is in the vital interest of the community-at-large that all inhabitants are identifiable,

WHEREAS under current state law, with the exception of Canadian driver's license applicants, other foreign-born residents whose proof of identity is an identity document issued by a foreign government are now excluded from obtaining a driver's license,

WHEREAS these immigrants are, like their Canadian counterparts, willing and able to prove their identity through foreign identity documents, and prepared to subject themselves to the rules and regulations governing operation of a motor vehicle,

WHEREAS the exclusion of these individuals from access to a driver's license is viewed as a threat to public safety by creating conditions that encourage unlicensed, unregistered drivers, drivers with improper vehicle insurance and an environment propitious for fraud and corruption,

WHEREAS the Texas Department of Public Safety's enforcement of the restrictive rules has led to complaints of lack of access and of excessive scrutiny of documentation, raising privacy and anti-discrimination concerns in addition to denial of access,

WHEREAS the denial of access undermines public trust and cooperation with local law enforcement and, makes those affected more vulnerable to becoming victims of crime, and

WHEREAS Texas has almost two million unlicensed, uninsured drivers on its roads and highways daily for work and basic day-to-day activities,

WHEREAS, it does not make business or economic sense for the two and three million workers that drive vehicles to get to and from work to be unable to legally obtain a driver's license or get their vehicles insured because current laws prohibit them from doing so.

THEREFORE, be it:

RECOMMENDED, That the Commission on Immigrant Affairs urges City Council to support any legislation that amends the Transportation Code and addresses the public safety of all Texans by ensuring that all drivers are licensed in the state pursuant to state law as well as to encourage all drivers to stop and

render aid at the scene of an accident without fear of being ticketed by law enforcement if they themselves do not have a valid driver's license.

RESOLVED, That the Commission on Immigrant Affairs strongly encourages to City Council to endorse any legislative proposals presented within the 2013 state of Texas Legislative session that creates a new form of driver permit that neither requires proof of lawful presence, nor is considered a Federally recognized form of identification.

PASSED by the Commission on Immigrant Affairs on May 13, 2013.

Unanimously approved by the Commission on Immigrant Affairs on a 4-0 vote.

Attest:

Connie H. Gonzales
Staff Liaison