



Driver's Cards for Undocumented Immigrants

The Problem:

The Real ID Act (Federal Legislation, 2005) requires proof of legal presence in the U.S. of anyone who applies for a driver's license. Undocumented immigrants don't have such documentation and therefore are no longer able to get driver's licenses. Undocumented immigrants are also unable to get car insurance. Because they have to get to work, take their children to school, buy groceries, etc., large numbers of immigrants continue to drive.

The Solution:

The Real ID Act is a response to the terrorist attacks and has to do with creating federal identification standards for national security purposes. However, the Act allows states to issue a "driving certificate" to those who can't provide the proper documentation, so long as these have a unique design and a clear statement that they cannot be accepted for any Federal identification purpose.

Why?

- Restricting driver's licenses results in unsafe roads and higher insurance rates. Undocumented immigrant drivers do not take driving classes, do not pass driving tests, cannot get insurance, and are more likely to flee the scene of an accident.
- Restricting driver's licenses erodes community trust. Immigrants who fear discrimination and being reported to immigration authorities avoid contact with law enforcement. Immigrants are unwilling to report crimes and assist local law enforcement fight criminal and terrorist activity.

In-State Tuition for Children of Undocumented Workers

The Problem:

Thousands of immigrant students in Wisconsin were brought to this country with their undocumented parents and are themselves undocumented. Because they have no social security numbers, they are not considered residents of Wisconsin and do not qualify for in-state tuition. This makes higher education financially unavailable to most of them.

The Solution:

The legislature needs to approve a simple change that will allow such students to attend the state universities and technical colleges at the same tuition rate as their high school classmates. To be eligible, students must have graduated from a Wisconsin high school and have been continuously present in this state for at least three years. Students would also promise to file an application for a permanent resident visa as soon they are eligible.

Why?

- Discrimination against the children would punish them for the acts of their parents, since the children had no choice in entering the United States.
- Many immigrant students have been here since grade school and have lived most of their lives in Wisconsin. This is home; they are likely to remain Wisconsin residents.
- Extremely high tuition rates for these youth (who do not qualify for loans or most scholarships) mean that Wisconsin is throwing away great potential.