

An Act Relative to Work & Family Mobility ([H.3456](#) / [S.2289](#)) would enable all qualified state residents to apply for a standard Massachusetts driver's license, regardless of immigration status, while keeping our Commonwealth in full compliance with REAL ID requirements.

Immigrants help make Berkshire County a vibrant and dynamic place to live. As business owners, taxpayers, and essential workers, they are valuable contributors to our local economy. This proposed legislation would support immigrants' ability to take care of their families, to take advantage of educational, cultural, and economic opportunities and to provide for themselves while also increasing public safety on our roads.

Living in the Berkshires and relying on public transportation is a huge challenge, especially with groceries, laundry, or small children in tow. Accessing specialized medical care or immigration appointments in Boston, Springfield or Hartford, CT is a logistical feat to attempt without a driver's license; a lack of viable public transportation options (meaning one that doesn't necessitate an overnight stay due to limited schedules), coupled with the inability to apply for driver's licenses, limits the ability of many immigrant families to access critical resources.

COVID-19 has shown the ways in which people of color and immigrants, many of whom are essential workers, have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. The inability to apply for a driver's license has further exposed many immigrant families to unsafe transportation options. Consider this: do we really want those needing to get tested for COVID-19 to take public transportation to the testing site, thereby exposing others? And how do you access drive thru COVID testing without a driver's license? And finally, for those fortunate enough to be vaccinated for COVID, what was requested at the door to verify that you are a MA resident? A state-issued identification card, which for many of us is a driver's license, something that many MA residents who are immigrants cannot [access](#).

Sixteen states including VT, NY, and CT have made driver's licenses available to residents regardless of their immigration status, which has resulted in more licensed (trained and insured) drivers on the road, a reduction in hit and run [accidents](#), and more revenue for the state via RMV and insurance companies. As parents of teenage drivers can attest, the driver's education and road safety instruction together with the driver's test that newly licensed drivers must pass, make the roads safer for all of us. Additionally, state revenue will increase as more residents pay for licenses and auto registrations.

When a law enforcement officer pulls over a driver without a license, this roadstop may become a time-consuming activity that can take an officer off the road for a few hours and involve an immigrant in the criminal justice system. Undocumented immigrants are not so much undocumented as they are without status. They have passports, consular identification cards, and birth certificates from their home countries that prove their identity. Permitting all immigrants, regardless of their immigration status, to apply for driver's licenses would enable them to share their verified identification with law enforcement, which is why this legislation has received the support of the MA Major City Chiefs of Police Association, with a strong endorsement from its President, Chelsea Police Chief Brian Keyes.

The Boston Globe Editorial Board recently released an [op-ed](#) citing why the passage of the Work & Family Mobility Act is essential for racial justice, public health, public safety, and economic equity. It's time for a more equitable Massachusetts.

Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier, Representative Christine P. Barber, Senator Brendan Crighton, and Senator Adam Gomez are the lead sponsors of the Work & Family Mobility Act ([HD.448](#) / [SD.273](#)), and Representative Paul Mark, Representative Smitty Pignatelli, Representative John Barrett, and Senator Adam Hinds are co-sponsors. District Attorney Andrea Harrington, Pittsfield Mayor Linda Tyer, and North Adams Mayor Tom Bernard have also publicly endorsed this bill. **TODAY** we join with them to advocate for the passage of this legislation to support immigrants in our communities and to promote increased public safety and health for us all.

For more information, please visit the Driving Families Forward [Coalition](#).

[Signed](#),

## Organizations

Karen Ruiz León, Community Outreach Counselor, **Berkshire Community College**

Michelle Lopez, Executive Director of the **Berkshire Immigrant Center**

Dondei Dean, Director and Lead Organizer of **Berkshire Interfaith Organizing**

Leticia Medina-Richman, Director-Central West Justice Center

Lia Spiliotes, CEO **Community Health Programs**

Lynn Chick, Moderator, **First Congregational Church Williamstown, UCC**

Elayne Murphy, Office Manager, **First Congregational Church Williamstown, UCC**

Rev. Mark Seifried, Interim Senior Minister, **First Congregational Church Williamstown, UCC**

Bridget Spann, Community Outreach Organizer, **First Congregational Church Williamstown, UCC**

Liliana Atanacio, Co-President **Latinas 413**

Catheryn Chacon, Co-President **Latinas 413**

Gwendolyn VanSant, CEO and Founding Director **Multicultural BRIDGE**

**Northern Berkshire Community Coalition**

Ilana Steinhauer, Executive Director, **Volunteers In Medicine**