

**Rose Catania**  
**House Bill No. 5305**  
**SUPPORT FOR**

I am a resident of Scituate and I am writing in support of House Bill 5305. As a scholar of immigration, I have reviewed the research on, and experienced first hand in other states, how allowing undocumented immigrants driver's licenses is a positive for everyone. First, the ability to drive increases the amount of working hours that undocumented immigrants can do, thus having a positive effect on the labor market.(1) Secondly, allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain licenses reduces the amount of hit and run accidents. In California, for example, after undocumented immigrants were able to receive licenses, hit and run accidents decreased by 10%. (2) Surely we could do with lowering the rate of these accidents in Rhode Island as well, especially as hit and run accidents "often delay emergency assistance, increase insurance premiums, and leave victims with significant out of pocket expenses."(2) This Stanford study found that in California, "ignoring the costs associated with stress, lost work, medical care, or loss of use, we estimate that, because AB60 led to an annual decline in hit and run accidents by about 4,000, not-at-fault drivers avoided out of pocket expenses for car repairs (physical damage) of about \$3.5 million."(2) Surely saving Rhode Islanders millions of dollars alone is enough to support this law. For a closer geographic example, a similar law in Connecticut also led to a decrease in hit and run accidents according to DMV data.(3) Another benefit for all residents of Rhode Island is the data that shows allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain licenses will lower auto insurance rates.(4) A multi-state study found that those states who did not allow undocumented immigrants to obtain licenses had higher insurance costs than those who did. (4)

Aside from the data that show enacting this law has public safety and economic benefits, I also support this law as it allows all our neighbors in Rhode Island--regardless of their immigration status--to participate in our community. It allows immigrants the chance to be part of Rhode Island by driving legally, which allows them access to education for their children, access to shopping, and to all the natural resources of our state. It is an economic and safety issue, but even more, it is an issue of integration and welcoming every member of our state. We should join with the other states who have already demonstrated their savvy in passing similar laws to H. 5305.

Thank you,  
Rose Catania  
PhD Candidate, Syracuse University

Citations:

(1) Catalina Amuedo-Dorantes, Esther Arenas-Arroyo, Almudena Sevilla. "Labor market impacts of states issuing of driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants." *Labour Economics*, Volume 63, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2020.101805>.

(2) Hans Lueders, Jens Hainmueller, and Duncan Lawrence. "Providing driver's licenses to unauthorized immigrants in California improves traffic safety." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. Apr 2017, 201618991; DOI.org/10.1073/pnas.1618991114

(3) Chris Burrell. "Licensed Undocumented Immigrants May Lead To Safer Roads, Connecticut Finds." *National Public Radio*. May 24, 2019. <https://www.npr.org/2019/05/24/719959760/licensed-undocumented-immigrants-may-lead-to-safer-roads-connecticut-finds>

(4) Mauricio Cáceres and Kenneth P. Jameson. "The effects on insurance costs of restricting undocumented immigrants' access to driver licenses." *Southern Economic Journal*. Volume 81, Issue 4, April 2015. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/soej.12022>