



CONNECTICUT CATHOLIC PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONFERENCE
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Testimony on
*H.B. 5180 "An Act Repealing the Statute Allowing
Motor Vehicle Operators' Licenses For Driving Purposes"*
Before the Transportation Committee
February 22, 2017

The Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference, the public policy office of Connecticut's Catholic Bishops, opposes H.B. 5180, which would repeal CGS §14-36m allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain a Connecticut operator's license for driving only.

This statute, passed in 2013, became effective on January 1, 2015, and its main purpose was two-fold: (1) to protect residents of our state from encountering unlicensed, untrained and uninsured drivers on our roadways; and (2) to provide undocumented workers a legal means to travel on the roads of our state for the purposes of work, shopping, and a variety of other personal reasons. The current statute is achieving its goals as approximately 40,000 "driving only" type licenses have been issued since the law became effective, making our roadways safer and allowing many immigrants the legal means to be productive members of our society.

Eliminating the "driving only" licenses would have no positive impact on our state. In fact, the repeal would be a step back as our roadways would again be filled with untrained, unlicensed and uninsured drivers. Additionally, undocumented immigrants would be forced to make a decision between driving illegally or possibly forgoing work opportunities. Their efforts to become productive members of our society, whether here legally or illegally, would be impacted. Both of these conditions would be a detriment to our state.

The Conference urges you to look beyond the negative attitude toward undocumented immigrants, which is pervasive in our society today, and consider these facts when reviewing this legislation. Our history is replete with many individuals struggling to find a better life for themselves and their families within the borders of our nation. As the many concerns around the issue of immigration unfold and are debated at the federal level, our state should support actions that assist all residents of our state, despite their immigration status, in being productive and law-abiding members of society.

Again, the Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference urges you to oppose H.B. 5180.

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