

Voces de la Frontera: Milwaukee to urge state's Joint Finance Committee to include driver licenses for all in the 2019 budget

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Who: Voces de la Frontera, immigrant community members, religious leaders, small business owners, supporters

What: Community presence in support of Driver Licenses for All at the Joint Finance Committee's public hearing in Oak Creek

When: Wednesday, April 10, 10am

Where: Oak Creek Community Center, 8580 S Howell Ave, Oak Creek, WI 53154

MILWAUKEE – On Wednesday, as the Wisconsin state legislature's Joint Finance Committee holds a public hearing in Oak Creek, Milwaukee residents will testify to urge the committee to restore driver licenses and state identification cards for all residents of Wisconsin regardless of immigration status or income as part of the 2019-2021 state budget. Press seeking to speak with supporters of Driver Licenses for All should arrive at 10am.

Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers has included measures to restore driver licenses for immigrant Wisconsinites in his 2019-2021 state budget proposal. Leaders from both parties have [spoken out](#) in support of restoring driver licenses for immigrants. Wisconsinites could obtain driver licenses regardless of immigration status

until 2007, when a law passed by the legislature the previous year requiring driver license applicants to have a Social Security Number went into effect.

“Expanded eligibility for driver licenses for undocumented immigrants is not a partisan political issue,” said Dane County Sheriff Dave Mahoney, who testified in support of driver licenses at the Joint Finance Committee public hearing in Janesville last Friday. “It makes sense because it will make our roads safer. Immigrant drivers will be able to take drivers training and would be required to take examinations before being issued a license. All residents of Wisconsin, regardless of immigration status or income should have equal access to drivers licenses.”

“I support the provisional driver card/license because I believe it will help keep the community of Green Bay and all of Wisconsin safer,” said Green Bay Chief of Police Andrew J. Smith in a [letter to legislators](#). “People will be tested and know the rules of the road. It will allow us to identify the people currently living in the shadows. I know there are a dozen states issuing licenses like these and by the accounts I have heard the program is working in those states. I sincerely hope we can do it here in Wisconsin.”

“Drivers’ identification cards are an absolute necessity in Wisconsin farming,” said Michael Slattery, a farmer, economist, and member of the Wisconsin Farmers Union. “Wisconsin dairy farmers generated more than \$43 billion dollars in milk production in 2018. Of that, it is estimated that roughly \$34 billion is produced on less than 900 farms employing about 6,500 farm workers, the vast majority of whom are undocumented. Dairy workers produce more than 10% of our state’s GDP. They are family-oriented people who are providing for their children, are upright and law-abiding and conscientious persons, and are willing to work difficult jobs. We need laws that facilitate our business. Other states have issued similar laws and the results have been redeeming. Let us have the same in Wisconsin.”

“Restoring access to driver licenses for immigrants will strengthen Wisconsin’s economy,” said Alejandro Rivera, a member of Voces de la Frontera and the owner of Rivera’s Western Wear in Milwaukee. “Also, people will feel safer to come forward to police to report crimes. There will be less fear. It will make our streets and highways safer as well, because more drivers will have licenses and insurance. Restoring driver licenses will make everyone safer.”

Voces de la Frontera has called for a [Day Without Latinxs & Immigrants general strike for May 1st, 2019](#), to urge the legislature to restore driver licenses for all.

Tens of thousands of Wisconsinites are expected to leave work, close their businesses, withdraw their children from school, and head to Madison, where a rally is scheduled for 11am on the State Street steps of the Wisconsin State Capitol.