

Voces De La Frontera: Wisconsin supports restoring driver licenses and in-state tuition for immigrant families

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MADISON, WISCONSIN – On Thursday night, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers formally unveiled his 2019-2021 state budget proposal, which includes restoring access to [driver licenses](#) and [in-state tuition](#) for immigrants in Wisconsin. Voces de la Frontera issued the following response:

“We are excited that Governor-elect Evers is including driver licenses and in-state tuition for all in his proposed budget,” said Christine Neumann-Ortiz, Executive Director of Voces de la Frontera. “We are committed to engaging voters from both parties and independents across the state to support these proposals, which will only strengthen Wisconsin. We urge leaders in the legislature from both parties to support these provisions.”

“Restoring in-state tuition will allow low-income families and first-generation college students like me to continue our education,” said Julio Gumeta, an organizer with Voces de la Frontera and DACA recipient. “Having to pay out-of-state tuition even though we have lived in Wisconsin almost our whole lives makes college practically impossible for many undocumented students and DACA recipients. Allowing more people to attain higher education will have a positive impact on the broader economy. When people get more education, they are able to earn more money, which they can invest in the community. In-state tuition would give me greater freedom and allow me to pursue my dreams.”

“Right now, without a driver license, it is very difficult for so many of our families to do basic everyday things like take our kids to school or go to the grocery store,” said Karina Sanchez, a mother and member of Voces de la Frontera’s Green Bay Chapter. “We pay taxes, we work hard, and we contribute. Right now, many immigrant families are being separated after being stopped for driving without a license. We are fighting to restore driver licenses and keep families together.” “For victims of domestic violence, a driver’s license is essential for asserting independence from an abusive relationship and seek safety and support,” said Veronica Figueroa, Executive Director of Unidos, a Madison-based community organization that works to end domestic violence. “It is a simple tool that can save a person’s life.”

“The Wisconsin Farmers Union recognizes the important role that immigrants play in our society and on our farms, and has for years supported the issuance of driver cards to allow immigrant workers, their families, and their farm employers to come out of the shadows,” said W. Michael Slattery, a farmer, economist, and member of the Wisconsin Farmers Union. “This approach is the way that we can be responsible citizens with our neighbors and employees, particularly in light of the inability of the US Congress to formulate a just and comprehensive immigration policy.”

“Immigrants help Wisconsin maintain strong, vibrant communities and can further contribute to the livelihood of our state by being allowed to obtain driver licenses without regard to documentation status,” said Ken Taylor, Executive Director of Kids Forward. “By tearing down barriers to licenses, lawmakers can make sure that our state is a great place to work, drive, and raise a family—for everyone.”

“The Racine Interfaith Coalition Immigration Task Force has worked for many years to restore driver licenses for all,” said Linda Boyle, a member of the Racine Interfaith Coalition. “We are pleased that Governor Evers is moving this issue forward.”

Voces de la Frontera and coalition partners will hold a [statewide day of action and lobby day on March 14th](#) at the Capitol in Madison beginning at 10am. The press and public are encouraged to attend.