

The Wisconsin Coalition for Safe Roads: Applauds Governor Evers' commitment to safe roads and communities by including restoring access to Drivers Licenses for All in state budget

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(Wisconsin) – The *Wisconsin Coalition For Safe Roads commends Governor Tony Evers on his steadfast commitment to ensuring safe roads and communities across Wisconsin. [His executive 2023-25 budget](#) includes a plan to restore access to driver's licenses for all Wisconsin residents, regardless of immigration status, as well as other pro-safe roads initiatives like accessible driver's education and auto insurance.

For decades, offering immigrants access to drivers licenses was the norm. But that changed in 2007 with the federal [REAL ID Act](#), which only allowed issuing driver's licenses to persons who are U.S. citizens or have legal status.

“Wisconsin is my home,” said **Hiram Rabadan, an immigrant essential worker from Fond du Lac.** “My wife and I have raised our children here together, and I’ve worked hard to build my reputation as a trusted local small business owner. As a professional mechanic, I dedicate my life to safe vehicles and safe roads, even though for years I could not legally drive, because my status made me ineligible for a drivers license.

I want to thank Governor Evers for recognizing me, and so many others like me,

who just want to be able to drive without the fear that a routine traffic stop could end in my deportation and our family separation. We've been fighting for this right, the simple right to drive to work, to school, to the grocery store, etc. for too long. Gov. Evers is recognizing the urgency to finally restore our ability to drive and allow us to fully participate and contribute back to our communities."

A total of [18 states \(plus D.C.\)](#) have successfully restored driver's licenses for all, with [Minnesota](#) being the latest to come close. The Wisconsin Coalition For Safe Roads is fighting to add Wisconsin to that list and is using statewide community alliances from business, faith, labor, law enforcement and other areas to get it done.

"Restoring access to drivers licenses for all is the right thing to do and it makes economic sense, " **said Michael Slattery, a farm owner in Manitowoc.** "As a proud farm operator and member of the Wisconsin Farmers Union, I can tell you that Wisconsin's farms are hurting from a labor shortage, and it's undocumented labor that is keeping our farms running. Dairy, the biggest single industry contributor to Wisconsin's GDP, depends on nearly 8,000 persons without valid driver's licenses to provide the basis for more than 10 percent of the state GDP.

There is no economic plan without immigrants, and it's in everyone's best interest to do what we can to support the immigrant labor force and safe roads. Drivers Licenses for All will allow immigrant workers to safely, and without fear of deportation, go to work and return home to their families at the end of the day."

Winning drivers licenses for all would not just benefit immigrants, it would have a major positive impact on all Wisconsinites. According to Kids Forward's [Widen the Roads report](#), providing driver licenses to undocumented individuals can lower insurance costs for all drivers, provide greater access to gainful employment, and create safer roads overall.

The Wisconsin Coalition For Safe Roads now hopes to educate, persuade, and gain support from all Wisconsinites and looks forward to participating in upcoming Joint Finance Committee Hearing public hearings.