

The Wisconsin Coalition for Safe Roads: Calls on the JFC to support access to Drivers Licenses for All in the state budget

Posted on Wednesday, Feb 22, 2023

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(Wisconsin) – On Tuesday afternoon the Wisconsin Coalition For Safe Roads, a statewide network of community alliances that represent business, faith, labor, law enforcement, and community organizations, held a press conference at the Wisconsin State Capitol.

[See the Facebook livestream here](#) or [on YouTube here](#). Speakers included (in order): **Reverend Breanna Illéné** from the Wisconsin Council of Churches; **Michael Slattery**, a farm operator from Manitowoc Wisconsin; **Madison Police Chief Shon Barnes**; **State Assembly Representative (District 8) Sylvia Ortiz - Velez**; Director of the American-Hispanic Association in Marathon County, **Tony Gonzales**; **Madison Mayor, Satya Rhodes-Conway**; and **Hiram Rabadan**, an immigrant small business owner from Fond du Lac. See below for select highlights.

The media event was a response to Governor Evers' state budget which [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.

Coalition speakers discussed the urgency to add Wisconsin to the list of states ([18 plus D.C.](#)) that have successfully secured drivers license reforms which give immigrant workers and families the ability to drive safely without fear of deportation over a routine traffic stop.

Restoring access to drivers licenses for all would have an enormous economic impact and [positive benefit for all Wisconsinites](#) with promises of lower insurance costs for every driver, greater access to gainful employment, and safer roads overall.

State Assembly Representative (District 8) Sylvia Ortiz said:

“For the sake of Wisconsin, we need to restore access to drivers licenses for all. First, it makes our roads safer ensuring that all drivers have been tested and know the rules of the road and have access to good auto insurance. We know that when people have drivers licenses and insurance, they tend to stay at the scene of an accident, and cooperate with law enforcement. Second, Wisconsin will face a shortage of 45,000 workers by 2024, and many jobs require drivers licenses or a car for public transportation. Restoring drivers licenses for all is essential in addressing the state’s labor shortage.”

Tony Gonzales, Director of the American-Hispanic Association in Marathon County said:

“(Marathon and surrounding counties) It’s an area that’s desperate for workers. There’s ‘wanted’ signs everywhere, nobody wants to work the dairy industry, nobody wants to work in the fields, except for people who are coming from a situation that is less than desirable.”

“This is not a REAL ID. This is not for employment. This is not for voter registration. It’s not for public benefits. It’s just for the privilege to be on the road. This should not be a victory for the left, or the right, it should be a victory for the state of Wisconsin, that needs the labor, that needs the people to carry on and make our economy great again.”

Madison Mayor, Satya Rhodes-Conway said:

“I’m here for a very simple reason, and that is that Madison is a welcoming city, and we want everyone in Madison to be safe on our streets.”

“I join the call to our legislatures, and to everyone in state government, to get this done and to make sure that everyone in Madison, and in Wisconsin, has the opportunity to get a drivers license if they want one.”

Hiram Rabadan, an immigrant small business owner from Fond du Lac

said:

“My family grew up here, we have our roots and our grandsons here. Sometimes it would be easier to just pack my stuff and go to a different state, but after being 20 plus years here in Wisconsin, I feel like a Wisconsinite, and instead of going to another state, I’m glad to be a part of this effort to restore drivers licenses in the state.”

“It is not possible to take every immigrant out of the United States, that’s not realistic, so why instead of considering immigrants a part of the problem, why don’t we start considering immigrants a part of the solution.”

Upcoming Media Event Details:

The Wisconsin Coalition for Safe Roads also announced an upcoming lobby day event in which constituents are welcome to join delegations meeting with local representatives to engage in meaningful conversations about the positive impact that supporting drivers licenses for all can have for Wisconsin.

What: A Wisconsin Coalition for Safe Roads Lobby Day. Constituents will be meeting with their local representatives on why they support drivers licenses for all, and why representatives should too. There will be opportunities for press interviews.

Where: The Wisconsin State Capitol, 2 East Main St., Madison, WI.

When: 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 8, 2023