

Rep. Rivera-Wagner: Bill allowing DACA recipients to earn occupational licenses, participate in our workforce passes state Assembly

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MADISON — State Rep. Amaad Rivera-Wagner (D-Green Bay) has co-authored a bill that would allow Wisconsin residents enrolled in the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program to obtain state occupational licenses, should they meet all other requirements. That bill, Assembly Bill 759 (AB759), passed the State Assembly today with bipartisan support.

“At a time when government seems to start more problems than solving them, this bill reminds us that many of our challenges are not partisan, like supporting DACA recipients, or Dreamers. This nonpartisan bill allows those we have invested in to work in our communities, from manufacturing to schools. I’m proud to bring this forward,” Rivera-Wagner shared.

In order to be enrolled in the DACA program, a person must have been brought to the U.S. as children prior to 2012; undergo extensive biennial background checks; pay a \$605 processing fee every two years; register for the U.S. military draft; have work authorizations, social security cards, and driver’s licenses; and pay state and federal taxes. Still, state law currently bars DACA recipients from working in any profession that requires professional licensure through the state. Some examples of these professions prohibited for DACA enrollees include nursing; teaching; plumbing; barbering; real estate; dentistry; and cosmetology. The bill would change that, provided that the individual meet all other educational and training requirements required for the professional license.

“Many of the people who would benefit from this bill went to our schools, played sports for our teams or cheered them on, go to our church, bagged our groceries, and they just want a chance to give back, in their chosen field, to the same communities that invested in them,” said Rivera-Wagner.

Nineteen states currently allow DACA recipients to access professional licenses.