

Co-Chair Senator Lee Beyer, Co-Chair Representative Caddy McKeown, and Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation -

I'm reaching out to you since I'm in high support of House Bill 2015: Equal Access to Roads. This Bill would allow people who can pass the driver's exam in Oregon to qualify for an Oregon driver's license regardless of their citizenship status. As for anyone else taking the test, they would still be expected to pay the standard fees associated with gaining a driver's license as well as provide proof of both residency and identity.

Having access to independent transportation is a key factor for majority of Oregon citizens to function on a daily basis and maintain their livelihood. Consistent tasks that are dependent on livelihood and utilize independent transportation include arriving to work on time, taking children to school, getting food/groceries, taking dependents and other family members to appointments or assisting in emergencies.

While there are some areas in Portland (and other larger cities in Oregon) that have a lot of different transportation options, it certainly isn't the case for all parts of Oregon. Even with alternate transportation options, that can sometimes mean doubling the commute times and thus being late for other responsibilities (e.g. have to drop dependents off to school or an appointment and then they are late for work and lose their job). That said, this obviously snowballs into other side-effects where people would be less self-sufficient and unable to maintain living standards for their households without other forms of assistance or become at-risk for housing.

As a repercussion, some individuals might then be motivated to still drive, but without a license. This would therefore potentially instigate bypassing the standard driving tests that the rest of Oregon drivers are required to take and then counter-act the whole intent of trying to keep the public safe. If an individual was put in a tough position where they had to seek this out as an option, it would also put them at-risk to be arrested and then (once again), unable to provide for their families.

Given that we as a nation have already demonstrated this past year that we are unable and do not have the resources to accommodate the fall-out from when a sole income-earner of household is deported or revoked access to work, it doesn't make sense on even a practical or logistical level to restrict individuals from obtaining a license based on citizenship status. I greatly encourage the committee to look at HB2015 and support it! I feel strongly that people should have equal access to opportunities to maintain a living while also being the most effective way to ensure public safety.

Thanks so much for your time,

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