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TO: The Honorable Detroit City Council

FROM: David Whitaker, Director 
Legislative Policy Division Staff

DATE: June 26, 2023

RE: RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF DRIVE SAFE LEGISLATION

Council Member Gabriela Santiago-Romero requested that the Legislative Policy Division (LPD) draft a resolution urging the Michigan Legislature to pass House Bills 4410, 4411, and 4412 and Senate Bills 0265, 0266, and 0267. These bills are known as Drive SAFE (Safety, Access, Freedom, and Economy) which will allow individuals above the age of 16 to preregister to vote. The Drive SAFE legislation would allow residents who are unable to show proof of U.S. citizenship or immigration status to obtain a Michigan driver's license and state identification cards.

Please contact us if we can be of any further assistance.

BY COUNCIL MEMBER GABRIELA SANTIAGO-ROMERO

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF DRIVE SAFE LEGISLATION

- WHEREAS,** The Michigan Legislature has recently introduced House Bills 4410, 4411, 4412, and Senate Bills 0265, 0266, and 0267, also known as Drive SAFE (Safety, Access, Freedom, and Economy); and
- WHEREAS,** This bill package is meant to allow Michigan residents who are unable to show proof of U.S. citizenship or immigration status to obtain a Michigan driver’s license and state identification cards, which was Michigan’s practice prior to 2008; and
- WHEREAS,** The Michigan League for Public Policy (MLPP) estimates that 55,000 of the 110,000 Michigan residents who are unable to prove their legal presence and are of driving age would likely apply for a driver’s license if Drive SAFE were to pass¹; and
- WHEREAS,** Many Michigan residents are unable to provide proof of legal status for a variety of reasons, whether they are a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipient, an undocumented immigrant, a legal immigrant awaiting verification documents due to bureaucratic administrative delays, citizens born abroad, or foreign adoptees; and
- WHEREAS,** Regardless of their current immigration status, immigrants and their families contribute to Michigan’s vibrant and diverse community in addition to contributing to the state’s economy as workers and tax payers; and
- WHEREAS,** Because of the lack of reliable public transportation in much of Michigan, it is a necessity for most Michigan residents to drive to work, school, church, medical appointments, shop for groceries, and purchase goods and services outside of their immediate areas; and
- WHEREAS,** Under current state law, Michigan residents who are unable to verify their immigration or citizenship status are prevented from obtaining a driver’s license or state identification card, forcing them to either not drive or to drive without a license; and
- WHEREAS,** Increasing the number of licensed drivers is expected to increase safety for all Michigan drivers, as a study by the American Automobile Association (AAA) shows that unlicensed drivers are far more likely to be involved in a fatal accident and more likely to flee the scene of an accident regardless of the driver’s immigration status²; and
- WHEREAS,** Although the potential influx new licensed drivers will create an administrative burden on the state, the MLPP estimates that the 55,000 new licensed drivers will generate \$100,000,000 in revenue for the state through licensing and registration fees, gas taxes, and

¹ Simon Marshall-Shah, “Taking our foot off the brakes: Why driver’s licenses for all makes sense,” Immigration, Jobs and Economy, December 19, 2019 - <https://mlpp.org/taking-our-foot-off-the-brakes-why-drivers-licenses-for-all-makes-sense/#:~:text=Allowing%20access%20to%20a%20driver's,participate%20in%20Michigan's%20local%20economy.>

² “Unlicensed to Kill,” AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, November 2011, <https://www.adtsea.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/aaa-unlicensed-to-kill.pdf>.

sales taxes on cars and car-related purchases, which does not account for the potential revenue that could result from the drivers' increased mobility and ability to earn wages; and

WHEREAS, Perhaps most importantly, these bills will allow Michigan's immigrant residents to more fully participate in our communities with dignity and without the fear and stigma that results from their inability to obtain a driver's license; and

WHEREAS, Under the proposed legislation package, the Secretary of State is forbidden from sharing any applicant's information with immigration enforcement agencies; and

WHEREAS, Currently, 19 states and the District of Columbia have passed laws similar to Drive SAFE; and

WHEREAS, The Detroit City Council recognizes that allowing Michigan's residents to obtain a driver's license or state ID promotes the interests of public safety, the state economy, and human decency; **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED, The Detroit City Council strongly urges the Michigan Legislature to pass House Bills 4410, 4411, 4412, and Senate Bills 0265, 0266, and 0267, also known as Drive SAFE; **THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY**

RESOLVED, That the Detroit City Clerk is directed to send this resolution to the Detroit delegations of both the Michigan State House and Senate, in addition to Governor Gretchen Whitmer.