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*FAIR is a nonprofit public interest organization working to end illegal immigration and to set levels of legal immigration that are consistent with the national interest.*



FEDERATION FOR AMERICAN IMMIGRATION REFORM

August 5, 2021

The Honorable Tim Hennessey  
Chairman  
Transportation Committee  
Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
Room G50, K. Leroy Irvis Office Building  
450 Commonwealth Avenue  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Chairman Hennessey and other distinguished members of the Committee:

My name is Shari Rendall and I am the Director of State and Local Engagement at the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR). FAIR is a non-profit, non-partisan organization of concerned individuals who believe that our immigration laws must be reformed to serve our nation's interests.

FAIR advocates for immigration policies that reduce the harmful impact of illegal immigration on national security, public safety, the economy, jobs, education, healthcare and the environment.

Founded in 1979, FAIR has roughly three million members and supporters nationwide including approximately 34,448 in Pennsylvania. On behalf of our members and supporters, I am writing to express FAIR's opposition to House Bill (HB) 279, which would grant driver's licenses to those in the United States illegally.

If enacted, HB 279 provides for Pennsylvania to issue driver's licenses to illegal aliens. Providing driver's licenses to illegal aliens is bad public policy and undermines the purposes and objectives of federal immigration law.

Federal law clearly states under what circumstances a person may legally reside in the United States. An illegal alien, by definition, does not possess lawful immigration status or lawful presence and is subject to immediate removal.<sup>1</sup> Granting driving privileges to illegal aliens treats them as if they are lawfully present in the U.S. and facilitates further illegal conduct.

A driver's license is useful to create an appearance of lawful presence and serves as a virtual passport to the nation, opening many doors that would otherwise be unavailable. In addition to giving an individual the ability to

<sup>1</sup> See the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. §1101, et seq.



travel freely throughout the country, it is also used for countless other purposes like registering to vote and applying for government benefits, as well as for establishing bank and credit card accounts. Giving illegal aliens driver's licenses provides them with the primary form of identification used by American citizens. The bottom line is that granting illegal aliens driver's licenses aids and abets their efforts to live and work illegally in the United States.

Moreover, granting driver's licenses to illegal aliens directly frustrates the intent behind the federal REAL ID Act. The goal of the REAL ID Act is to ensure that those who are in the country illegally with the intention to do us harm – like the 9/11 terrorists -- are not provided with the documents to facilitate their heinous mission.

Unlike legal immigrants, illegal aliens are not subject to stringent background checks or face-to-face interviews to determine whether they pose a national security threat. The nineteen September 11 terrorists carried among them over 30 state driver's licenses and identification cards. These documents allowed them to drive, board the airplanes they hijacked to attack this nation, obtain housing, transportation, and other accommodations, all without raising suspicion while they carried out their deadly conspiracy. It was with this in mind that the 9/11 Commission recommended legislation to Congress that ultimately became the REAL ID Act.

Finally, granting a driver's license to illegal aliens accommodates and rewards those who violate our immigration laws and encourages others to follow the same path. States that grant driver's licenses to illegal aliens become magnets for more illegal immigration. And this unfairly gives prospective immigrants little incentive to pursue legal paths to immigration when they can side step the process and gain the same benefits.

For the aforementioned reasons, I urge you to oppose HB 279.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide my input. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me, if I may be of assistance. I may be reached by email at [srendall@fairus.org](mailto:srendall@fairus.org) or by phone at 202-328-7004.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shari Rendall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Shari Rendall