Until 2008, all Michiganders—including undocumented immigrants and those who cannot prove their legal presence—had the ability to obtain a driver’s license after passing a driver’s test and meeting other requirements. The law changed after Attorney General Mike Cox issued an opinion on the issue in 2007 and the Legislature took action to codify this opinion into law.

The Drive SAFE (Safety, Access, Freedom and the Economy) bills were introduced in Nov. 2019 by Sens. Stephanie Chang (D-Detroit) and Winnie Brinks (D-Grand Rapids), and Reps. Alex Garza (D-Taylor) and Rachel Hood (D-Grand Rapids).

These bills would bring Michigan law up to speed with that of 14 other states that allow residents who meet all other requirements to obtain a driver’s license: CA, CO, CT, DE, HI, IL, MD, NV, NM, NY, OR, UT, VT, WA, plus Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia.

Benefits of passing the Drive SAFE bills

- **55,000** New licenses
- **20,000** Vehicle purchases

$13.5M in annual recurring revenue, including sales and gas taxes

$12M in revenue over 10 years

$100M in the first three years

**MORE INSURED DRIVERS AND LOWER AUTO INSURANCE**

20,000 more Michigan drivers would be insured and have passed driver’s tests.

To register a passenger vehicle in Michigan, one must have auto insurance. Roads are safer and accidents are resolved more smoothly when more drivers have passed a standardized driving test and are insured.

Across the country, states that allow undocumented immigrants to apply for driver’s licenses see lower annual premiums; doing so in Michigan would save Michiganders about $20 a year. Although this is a modest decrease, that is enough to pay for a car wash in the thick of Michigan winter!

**MORE RESIDENTS PARTICIPATING IN MICHIGAN’S LOCAL ECONOMY**

Allowing undocumented immigrants to apply for driver’s licenses would support Michigan’s booming agricultural industry. In addition, access to a driver’s license means access to amenities and opportunities beyond one’s immediate community, including new businesses and higher-paying jobs.