



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

House of Representatives

State House, Boston 02133-1054

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**CHAIR**

JOINT COMMITTEE ON

MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE USE

AND RECOVERY

June 23, 2021

The Honorable William Straus  
The Joint Committee on Transportation,  
House Chair  
24 Beacon St., Room 134  
Boston, MA, 02133

The Honorable Joseph Boncore  
The Joint Committee on  
Transportation, Senate Chair  
24 Beacon St., Room 112  
Boston, MA, 02133

RE: **H.3456** *An Act relative to work and family mobility during and subsequent to the COVID-19 emergency*

Dear Chairman Straus, Chairman Boncore and esteemed Members of the Committee:

I write today to express my strong support of **H.3456** *An Act relative to work and family mobility during and subsequent to the COVID-19 emergency*. This critical piece of legislation is a priority for myself and my district. I respectfully request that the committee advance H.3456 with a favorable report.

This bill would allow for all qualified Massachusetts residents to apply for and receive either a standard Massachusetts driver's license or identification card. To apply, residents must provide proper documentation and prove Massachusetts residency.

Immigrants without status are an integral part of my district and our greater Commonwealth. As we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that all people, regardless of their immigration status, are able to access

services, resources, and care, safely and without fear due to their lack of documentation issued by the Massachusetts government. Without driver's licenses, our undocumented immigrant neighbors either lack access to these essential services or have placed their health and their families health at-risk through carpooling.

This legislation is of significant interest to my district, where nearly half of residents are foreign-born, and many do not have access to opportunities to legalize their immigration status. I join residents of my district in supporting this legislation because we recognize the impact it would have on the ability of families to drive their children to school, travel to urgent medical appointments, and reach job opportunities in other parts of the Commonwealth.

I have also heard countless times from school-aged children in my district who fear they may be separated from their undocumented parents by immigration enforcement authorities if they are stopped by law enforcement for driving without a license. These sentiments drive fear and distrust between immigrant communities, law enforcement, and authorities -- threatening our public safety efforts and the wellbeing of our youth. The long-term effects of living with feelings of fear and distrust towards law enforcement have manifested themselves into harmful mental and behavioral conditions for young children that could shape the rest of their lives. No child should fear that their parents will be taken away from them. While we cannot address federal immigration policy at the state level, we have the opportunity to affirm to the children of immigrants and their families that they are safe and an essential part of our Commonwealth.

The need for this legislation has been especially pronounced during the coronavirus pandemic. At the commencement of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, many members of the Latinx community and the immigrant community cited lack of transportation as a barrier to vaccination. Some of the first mass vaccination sites, such as Gillette Stadium, were not accessible by public transportation, delaying the ability of undocumented populations to get vaccinated. Having access to driver's licenses would have allowed more undocumented people to get vaccinated earlier, which is necessary to public health efforts to curb serious illness from COVID-19 and transmission rates. Additionally, though identification is not

required to get vaccinated, many sites still requested identification from members of the public, deterring undocumented individuals without forms of identification from the Commonwealth from getting vaccinated. By allowing all qualified residents of the Commonwealth to obtain a driver's license, we can increase the number of undocumented residents with access to state government-issued identification, which can enhance public health efforts to vaccinate as many people as possible by giving undocumented communities certainty that identification will not be a barrier to vaccination.

The ability of immigrants without status to obtain a driver's license has had a measurable, positive effect on traffic safety. Drivers without status are more likely to fear police interactions, regardless of the situation, and are therefore at a higher risk of fleeing accident sites. Alternatively, individuals with driver's licenses, regardless of their immigration status, are less likely to exhibit this type of behavior. Studies have shown that roads are generally safer in states that have allowed immigrants without status to obtain driver's licenses. In California and Connecticut, for example, after both states passed laws similar to the one before this Committee, each state saw a 10% and 9% reduction in hit and run crashes, respectively. It is important to note that no association has been found directly linking immigration and crime, and statistics show that immigrants are actually less likely than native-born residents to commit crimes. I believe granting qualified immigrants without status a driver's license would enhance cooperation between immigrant communities and law enforcement and make the Commonwealth safer, with all drivers insured and held to the same training standards. The reduction in fatal accidents through the proper training and education of licensed drivers and the increased cooperation between immigrant communities and law enforcement would be a boon to public safety on our roads. Our public safety officers agree, which is why this bill has been endorsed by the Massachusetts Major City Chiefs of Police Association.

Last session, when I served as House Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on Transportation, we took the historic step of reporting this bill out favorably for the first time in its fifteen-year legislative history. Following the favorable report of this legislation last session, the lead sponsors and the coalition supporting this bill

have worked tirelessly to garner even more support for the bill. This session the bill has bi-partisan support and 82 House Co-Sponsors.

Driving is often necessary. We have the power to remove unnecessary barriers and improve access to basic necessities and services. This bill is imperative to support my constituents and has the broad based support needed to be adopted by the House of Representatives. I respectfully urge the Committee to favorably report H.3456 out of committee in order to ensure that the merits of the proposal may be considered by the entire House of Representatives in a timely manner.

Thank you to the committee for your thoughtful and thorough review of the legislation before you. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrian C. Madaro', with a stylized, cursive flourish at the end.

**Adrian C. Madaro**  
Representative  
First Suffolk District