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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

January 10, 2023

The Honorable D. Scott Dibble, Chairman
Minnesota Senate Transportation Committee
Senate Building, Room 1100
95 University Avenue West
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Senate File 27

Dear Chairman Dibble 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 three million members and supporters nationwide including 5,500 in Minnesota. On behalf of our members and supporters, I am writing to express FAIR's opposition to Senate File (SF) 27 that grants driver's licenses to those in the United States illegally.

If enacted, SF 27 provides for Minnesota 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.¹ Granting driving privileges to illegal aliens treats them as if they are lawfully present in the U.S. and facilitates further illegal conduct.

¹ See the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. §1101, *et seq.*



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 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 major form of identification used by U.S. 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 undermines the intent behind the federal REAL ID Act. The goal of the REAL ID Act is ensuring that the 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.

While not every individual who enters the United States unlawfully poses a public safety or national security risk, unlike legal immigrants, illegal aliens are not subject to stringent background checks or face-to-face interviews to determine whether they pose a threat. The nineteen September 11 terrorists carried among them over 30 state driver's licenses and identification cards. These documents allowed them drive, to board the airplanes they hijacked to attack this nation, obtain housing, transportation, and other accommodations, without raising suspicion while they carried out their deadly conspiracy. According to US Customs and Border Protection (CBP), in Fiscal Year 2022, 98 individuals on the terrorist watch list were encountered on the southern border between ports of entry.² Additionally, CBP arrested 29,021 individuals attempting to cross the border with criminal convictions. Among those arrested were 751 criminal aliens with gang affiliations, including 312 MS-13 members.³

Proponents of providing driver's licenses to illegal aliens claim that it will make Minnesota roads safer. However, granting driver's licenses to illegal aliens does not make our roads safer. In 2018, a study conducted by AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found drivers without a valid license are responsible for 20 percent of all automobile accidents. This same study found that five percent of the drivers

² US Customs and Border Protection, [CBP Enforcement Statistics Fiscal Year 2022](#)
[U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#)

³ Ibid.

involved in fatal car accidents were unlicensed drivers. Ninety-five percent of the drivers involved in fatal car crashes were licensed drivers or drivers whose licenses were suspended, revoked, expired, cancelled, or denied. Therefore, any correlation between road safety and unlicensed drivers is tenuous at best.

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 illegal immigration. It also 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, FAIR urges you to oppose SF 27.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our 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 or by phone at 202-328-7004.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shari Rendall". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of "Shari" being a large, stylized capital "S".

Shari Rendall