



National Latino Peace Officers Association

Minnesota State Chapter

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c/o Majority Leader Ryan Winkler,
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Members of the Minnesota House of Representatives:

On behalf of the National Latino Peace Officers Association MN Chapter, we strongly endorse the Driver's Licenses For All legislation now before the Minnesota legislature.

As a police officer serving in the state of Minnesota, I know that licensed drivers are safer drivers. They have studied traffic laws to pass the written test and have practiced driving skills to pass the road test in order to get a license. They are less fearful of routine interaction with police officers and more willing and able to cooperate with law enforcement. Licensed drivers also are more likely to have insurance. After passing laws to allow undocumented drivers access to licenses, New Mexico saw its [rate of uninsured drivers drop](#) by 24%. Utah saw a similar drop of 20%.

To protect our community, we need the trust and cooperation of people in the community every day. That includes citizens and immigrants, adults and youth, documented and undocumented people. When people are afraid to talk to police or afraid to call and report a crime, that makes everyone in the community less safe.

Driver's licenses serve as identification for many kinds of routine interaction with police. That helps both police officers and the individual we are talking to, whether that individual is a crime victim making a report to us, a witness or potential witness in a case, or someone we are ticketing for going five miles over the speed limit or for having a burnt-out tail light. If someone has a driver's license for identification, these are all routine interactions. If someone does not have a license, these interactions can become frightening for the individual and frustrating for the officer.

As a Latino resident of Minnesota, I also know that Driver's Licenses For All will help families in our community. Many families are mixed-status: one or both parents may be undocumented, with children who are U.S. citizens. Parents need to be able to drive their

children to after-school activities or doctor's appointments. They need to drive to work and church and the grocery store.

Since our founding in 2002, the Minnesota Latino Peace Officers Association has worked, as our mission statement says, "To ensure equal opportunity in the administration of justice for our members and the communities we serve..." Before 2003, driver's licenses in Minnesota were equal opportunity licenses, available to anyone who was old enough to qualify and who passed the tests. I hope that this session of the Minnesota legislature restores that equal opportunity for all to get driver's licenses.

Base on the foregoing, we fully support Driver License For All in every possible way.

Sincerely,

Francisco Ortíz

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