



Massachusetts Catholic Conference
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LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

To: Joint Committee on Transportation
From: James F. Driscoll, Esq., Executive Director
Re: House Bill 2985 “An Act relative to safe driving.”
Date: March 7, 2016

The Massachusetts Catholic Conference (“MCC”) respectfully submits this testimony in support of House Bill 2985, “An Act relative to safe driving.”

House Bill 2985 would remove immigration status as a barrier for applying for a license or learner’s permit. The so-called “Safe Driving Bill” would allow all Massachusetts residents to become trained, licensed and insured, making Massachusetts roads considerably more safe for all drivers.

In Massachusetts, many drivers are ineligible for driver’s licenses because of immigration status. Applicants for a license must provide their Social Security Number or immigration visa code. Families require transportation to drive children to school, attend doctor’s appointments, and many other of life’s various errands that fill the day-to-day lives of families.

If House Bill 2985 were to be enacted, all drivers would learn the traffic rules which would increase family mobility, support our economy by allowing workers to safely get to their jobs, and potentially save lives by increasing knowledge of the Massachusetts traffic and driving laws.

The Catholic Church has long been concerned with the well-being of immigrant families, the “stranger in our midst.” The Roman Catholic Bishops recently commented on the state of the immigrant in America today, saying “in the Catholic community, welcoming the immigrant is central to our beliefs and lived out in our institutions. The principles of our moral teaching, convictions about personal dignity, human rights, and the unity of the human family are the foundations of our public advocacy...”¹

Enactment of the Safe Driving Bill would be one small step in welcoming the immigrant in our communities as well as making the streets and highways of the Commonwealth safer to all drivers.

Because of this, the Massachusetts Catholic Conference urges a favorable report for the aforementioned legislation.

The Massachusetts Catholic Conference is the public policy office of the Roman Catholic Bishops in the Commonwealth, representing the Archdiocese of Boston and the Dioceses of Fall River, Springfield, and Worcester.

¹ “A Statement of the Roman Catholic Bishops of Massachusetts on Comprehensive Immigration Reform,” July 15, 2013. <http://www.macatholic.org/sites/macatholic.org/files/assets/Comprehensive%20Immigration%20Reform%20Statement%207.16.2013.pdf>.