

April 11, 2013

Senate Business and Transportation Committee
Oregon Senate
900 Court St SE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Beyer and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today.

My name is LS and I am a small business owner in Rockwood, which is at the West end of Gresham and part of the Gresham Urban Renewal. I have owned and operated my insurance agency in Rockwood for the last 15 years.

My agency serves a large Hispanic community. I have Spanish speaking staff and have enjoyed serving this market. This market contributes significantly to the success of my agency.

I find it illogical that the State of Oregon would purposely encourage people to drive without insurance. And yet that is exactly what it has done. To me, this is not an immigration issue; it is a public safety and economic issue.

About 1 in 7 drivers involved in an accident is uninsured. What that means to the average consumer, is that we all pay higher insurance rates to cover those uninsured drivers. It is much like a retail store which has to charge higher prices to cover theft. And according to an article by KTVZ.com¹, this costs the state over \$85 million a year. I implore you to allow undocumented immigrants, as well as homeless and elderly people to obtain a driver's license with or without a social security number. As it stands now, if you don't have a social security number, you cannot renew your driver's license. And without a valid driver's license, you cannot obtain insurance.

In my agency we have about 8-10 people a month who come into our agency wanting to get insurance but we can't help because they don't have a valid driver's license. In some cases, it's a husband and wife who come in. Let's say the husband has a valid license, but the wife does not. In that case, if we know the wife is going to be driving anyway, we cannot offer them insurance. And so the husband, a licensed driver, is unable to drive insured.

From a business perspective, this hurts me as an individual agent resulting in lower sales. From a consumer perspective, this hurts them as it causes higher insurance rates. From an undocumented immigrant's perspective, this is making them drive without a valid license as well as without insurance. They want and need insurance.

I ask that you support Senate Bill 833 allowing applicants who otherwise qualify, but are unable to provide proof of legal US residency to obtain a driver's license.

I wish to thank the bill's bi-partisan sponsors and Governor Kitzhaber for addressing this important issue.

Sincerely,

Lori Stegman

¹ <http://www.ktvz.com/news/Ore-lawmakers-propose-short-term-license-bill/-/413192/19562060/-/2e9qtq/-/index.html>