

4/14/19
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TO: the Joint Committee on Transportation, state of Oregon
Co chair: Senator Lee Beyer, Co Chair Rep. Caddy McKnown, and members of the
Joint Committees on Transportation

FROM: Dr Virginia Feldman
RE: House Bill 2015 Equal Access to Roads Act

Dear Transportation Committee:

My testimony in support of HB 2015 stems from my experience as a physician, who's worked in many clinics in Oregon where health care is provided to low income patients—often refugees or immigrants. Over the last 3 years, since immigrants have become increasingly and appropriately afraid of being detained while driving, I have seen attendance at the various clinics I worked fall remarkably. And, if such patients got themselves to the clinic for a visit, they often said they'd not taken their medicines because they didn't want to risk driving to a pharmacy. Many of these patients no longer had current driver's cards because of passage of the previous law taking away the right to drive of non-citizen Oregon residents. Sometimes, a patient drove anyway—not wanting to have their teenage citizen child, who had a valid license, take time off school, or work, to drive their parent to appointments, or drugstores. Such diabetic patients often ended up in our ERs, with worse medical conditions. This greatly increased cost to them, and/or to the State.

I have also seen the anxiety disorders such stresses create in families, as they try to decide to either NOT work, or to NOT eat, because they could no longer drive to work for their wages. As a pediatrician I know that such stresses, on emotion and finances, are very bad for children, in both their physical and emotional health.

I am also an ACLU Legal Observer at Washington County Courthouse. There I see cases of immigrant drivers whose previous licenses have expired, but they cannot now legally renew. Due, however, to these pressures to support their families regardless of current license, they drive anyway, and get a ticket. Yes, it is not legal to drive without a current license. But... I know I would feel compelled to drive to work so **I** could feed MY family if it came to that. The answer is not to waste our court system's time and money to prosecute these infractions of the law; but to change this unjust law.

Licensed drivers have been shown to have lower accident rates; and when *licensed* drivers have accidents, they have insurance. Both these realities make for lower costs to the State—fewer injuries to fix in ERs, and fewer uninsured motorists to cover.

Please consider all these, as well as issues of fairness, and support HB 2015.

THANK YOU,

Dr Virginia Feldman
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Dr. Virginia M. Feldman M.D.

