



April 16, 2019

To: Joint Committee on Transportation

From: Michele Ruffin, Oregon Advocacy Manager, Forward Together

RE: House Bill 2015: Equal Access to Roads Act

Co-Chair Senator Lee Beyer, Co-Chair Representative Caddy McKeown, and Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

Forward Together works in Oregon and nationally to win rights, recognition and resources for all families. Since our founding in 1989, we have continually fought to dismantle the ways our society marginalizes us based on race, gender and sexuality. Today, we build courage and foster connection among our multi-racial community of change makers to secure the rights, recognition and resources all families need to thrive. HB 2015 takes a much needed step in that work by ensuring that every Oregonian is able to attain a driver's license. This is critical because requiring all drivers, regardless of citizenship or immigration status, to pass a written safety exam and driver's test and provide proof of identity and insurance makes Oregon roads and communities safer for everyone.

Right now, there are over 100,000 Oregonians who live here, work here, and raise their kids here who are not currently eligible for a driver's license due to current restrictions. This puts many immigrants without legal status in an impossible position: either choose to drive without a license and risk arrest and deportation or choose not to drive and be unable to provide for their family. Parents and kids live this reality every day, from trips to work, doctors' visits, to school and back-- the reality of keeping this access from all families means we all risk our safety. Oregonians shouldn't have to live in fear of being deported or worry about their families being torn apart simply because they are taking their kids to school, going to work, or taking care of their family or neighbors.



Forward Together has heard countless stories from Oregonians, many from those who drive their parents to work because they as high school or college students are the only ones in their family eligible for a license. For many, this has meant students cut back on studies or extracurricular activities because the alternative risks arrest or deportation for parents or relatives. This is why Forward Together supports HB 2015 and encourages this committee to pass it.

Sincerely,

Michele Ruffin
Oregon Advocacy Manager
Forward Together