

Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

My name is Arturo Ramos, I moved to Oregon in 1998 and lived in Portland for 16 years. I made Oregon my home, I made friends, I got a family and we bought a house. I worked really hard to put food on the table for my family, I took an apprentice program through the Union of Painters and Allied Trades to become a professional glass glazier. This gave me the opportunity to get a job with good pay and benefits that helped me provide for my family. I was thankful for having a driver's license since it was required as part of the job to drive the company trucks. I worked in US Bank building in downtown Portland, where I was asked to give my driver's license at the entrance, and it was returned at the end of the day.

I worked hard and we were doing well economically until my driver's license expired and I was told I couldn't renew it because at the time I didn't have a legal status. Losing the ability to drive meant I would also lose my job and I could lose my house or risk being arrested. Around the same time, I had just submitted a petition to obtain legal status, I really needed to keep my job and I couldn't risk being detained. I had no other option but to move to Washington where I had to start from scratch, I went from owning a home to renting an apartment. For the first six months we spent most of our days visiting our family in Portland and we would drive back to Washington just to sleep.

It took me over two years to recover from all hardships, my union helped me find a new job in Washington and we were able to buy a house in a new home state. Having a Driver's License is really important for working people like me to provide for our families, and to be part of our communities. Thank you for your consideration on this bill, I hope you can support HB 2015.