

Testimony in SUPPORT of **SB234/HB23: Maryland Driver Privacy Act**

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Political Latinx United for Movement and Action in Society (PLUMAS) strongly urges representatives in the Maryland General Assembly to vote YES on SB234/HB23, which would further solidify the protections that Maryland drivers, especially those with undocumented statuses, have on their privacy. The current system is unjust, xenophobic, and predatory. This bill will benefit everyone regardless of status and is necessary in order to ensure that those who are most vulnerable to unfounded searches by government entities like ICE are protected and are able to live with a little more peace of mind.

Personally, I think driving is a lot more symbolic than people think. When I first started driving I was absolutely terrified, but I had no choice. I am from a low-income family that only has one car so I needed to learn to drive to pick up my sibling from school and take care of errands when my parents were working. Eventually, I felt more comfortable and passed my driving exam on the first try. Had I not been able to drive I would have had to take multiple busses for over an hour just to get to school in the morning. Driving taught me how to manage my time and money more effectively and also gave me a sense of freedom that is hard to obtain sometimes when you are low-income. Being able to drive represents responsibility, growth, and independence. No one can obtain a license to drive in Maryland without completing various steps of precaution such as driving classes and mandatory practice hours. Maintaining a license also entails a great deal of commitment to being safe and responsible with your activities and following the laws set for us. This may take some people months or even years to build up to. When someone is issued a license from the state of Maryland, there is an unspoken social contract that the state of Maryland trusts its drivers and its drivers trust their state to ensure the

privacy and safety of themselves and others around them. Driving is not a privilege or a mere convenience but rather a necessary tool for some people's everyday lives.

Thus, when I heard about how ICE has been given permission to search up Maryland drivers without consent I was absolutely horrified. The contract is broken. How can I trust that my state is truly concerned about my safety and privacy when they allow an abhorrent and malicious organization to freely search up the information of MD residents who EARNED and PROVED their use and need of a license? I myself am a citizen and felt horrified. I cannot imagine the fear and pain that my fellow undocumented Marylanders felt when they found out about this gross neglect of their rights. Even Marylanders who are citizens should be concerned about how their information is being used without their consent. If the state of Maryland truly wants to regain the trust and respect of its citizens, SB234/HB23: Maryland Driver Privacy Act must be passed. This common-sense bill does not give drivers any special privileges, but rather sets the bare minimum when it comes to the protection of Marylander's rights and privacy, something that the state of Maryland has yet to prove to its residents. Could you imagine how it would feel to have to compromise the fear for you and your family's safety and simply needing transportation to go to work every day? Of course, you can't and don't need to. But what you can do is ensure that no Marylander has to any longer.

Amy Rivera

PLUMAS President