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## **ACLU OF RI POSITION: SUPPORT**

### **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF 22-S 2006, AN ACT RELATING TO OPERATORS' AND CHAUFFEURS' LICENSES March 10, 2022**

The ACLU of RI strongly supports this bill, which would ensure that immigrant drivers, regardless of their status, are trained, tested, licensed and insured. Contrary to the views of opponents of this legislation, passing this bill will therefore actually promote public safety.

As long as there is a substantial population of undocumented immigrants in the state, it makes little sense to deprive them of a license solely because of their immigration status. Allowing individuals to get a license promotes safe driving since it will require them to pass a driving test and have insurance, and it will further provide a means of identification for law enforcement and for other purposes.

Whether a person should get a driver's license should be based solely on whether they are qualified as drivers and are residents of *the state*. No more should be required. At the same time, this bill is carefully crafted to ensure that only people who can prove their identity and their residence in Rhode Island will qualify for licenses.

Last year, this legislation died in the House after passing the Senate. Fiscal concerns were raised about implementation of this program. Those concerns are completely unwarranted, and we are available to provide detailed documentation that shows that implementation of this law will likely result in net revenue for the state.

It is time for Rhode Island to join the sixteen other states – including such diverse jurisdictions as Connecticut, Virginia, New Mexico, Nevada and Utah – that authorize licenses for undocumented immigrants.

The ACLU urges the committee's passage of this legislation once again.