

OFFICE OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY ATTORNEY

John J. Choi, County Attorney



50 West Kellogg Boulevard, Suite 315 • St. Paul, Minnesota 55102-1553

Telephone (651) 266-3222 • Fax (651) 266-3010

January 30, 2015

Senator Bobby Joe Champion
306 Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Representative Rod Hamilton
443 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: HF97/SF224 Legislation to reinstate all drivers in Minnesota to apply for driver's licenses regardless of immigration status

Honorable Legislators,

Thank you for your leadership in bringing forth this important legislation. As Ramsey County Attorney, I am concerned about the prevalence of unlicensed drivers in Minnesota. I understand that in 2002, there was a change in the rules governing driver's licenses which resulted in restricting driving privileges to only U.S. citizens and legal residents. I am aware that there is bipartisan legislation currently introduced that would reinstate the ability for all drivers in Minnesota to apply for a driver's license regardless of immigration status, and that these licenses will include a "status check" on them.

Statewide, nearly 20 percent of drivers do not carry insurance, according to the Insurance Federation of Minnesota. This percentage skyrockets for undocumented immigrants since one must have a valid driver's license in order to secure insurance. As most driving accidents are caused by unlicensed motorists, we clearly have a problem in our community that requires your attention as lawmakers.

Allowing all drivers to apply for a driver's license will ensure that everyone driving on our roads is required to pass an exam demonstrating knowledge of our traffic laws and regulations. It will also increase the likelihood of drivers carrying auto insurance.

A number of states have prioritized public safety by passing laws allowing their residents to apply for a driver's license regardless of their status. I understand that, according to the proposed legislation, the requirements to obtain a driver's license without a social security number will be very stringent. I support this measure because I believe it will result in more licensed, insured drivers on our roads and thereby enhance public safety.

I fully endorse HF97/SF224 so that we can make our state a better and safer Minnesota, and I hope the legislature will as well. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John J. Choi".

John J. Choi
Ramsey County Attorney



OFFICE OF THE HENNEPIN COUNTY ATTORNEY

MICHAEL O. FREEMAN COUNTY ATTORNEY

February 13, 2015

Senator Bobby Joe Champion
306 Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Rod Hamilton
443 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: House File 97 / Senate File 224

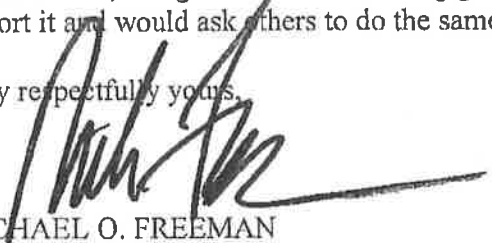
Dear Senator Champion and Representative Hamilton:

I write to express my support for House File 97 / Senate File 224. The safety of our public roads relies on the training, testing, licensing, and insuring of those who operate vehicles on them. Today, many people who live and work in our communities are barred from participation in these longstanding safety measures. We would all be better off if every driver were able to obtain a license, acquire insurance, and operate a vehicle on our roads with the sanction of the State. I therefore support this bill and the commonsense changes it would make.

The current prohibition on licensing of undocumented persons also poses other problems for enforcing our laws. Today, an undocumented person talking with a peace officer, whether at the scene of an accident, a traffic stop, or elsewhere, often has no government identification document to show that officer. This bill would help to solve that problem and would similarly aid other law enforcement efforts and criminal prosecutions by giving us more and better information about the people who live in our communities.

This bill is good for public safety, good for the rule of law, and good for those seeking greater participation in our society and economy. I support it and would ask others to do the same.

Very respectfully yours,


MICHAEL O. FREEMAN
Hennepin County Attorney

WINONA COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL



MAILING ADDRESS: 171 WEST THIRD STREET • WINONA, MN 55987

TO: Rep. Karen Clark (rep.karen.clark@house.mn)
Rep. Jim Newberger (rep.jim.newberger@house.mn)
Rep. Ron Erhardt (rep.ron.erhardt@house.mn)
Rep. Paul Thissen (rep.paul.thissen@house.mn)
Rep. Frank Hornstein (rep.frank.hornstein@house.mn)
Sen. Scott Dibble (sen.scott.dibble@senate.mn)
Sen. Bobby Joe Champion (sen.bobby.champion@senate.mn)
Sen. Susan Kent (sen.susan.kent@senate.mn)
Sen. John C. Pederson (sen.john.pederson@senate.mn)

FROM: The Winona County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

RE: House File 97 and Senate File 224

DATE: February 25, 2015

The Winona County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) supports House File 97 and Senate File 224 and strongly encourages the Minnesota State Legislature to approve this legislation. These bills enhance public safety by allowing all Minnesota residents, regardless of their immigration status, to obtain a Minnesota driver's license.

Since its formation in 2007, the CJCC has advocated for changes to the existing Minnesota driver's license law that echoes the sentiment of House File 97 and Senate File 224. The work that the CJCC has done has gained great support not only from our committee members, but also from our community as a whole. The following statements from our CJCC members represent the CJCC's position on this issue:

"People who are living and working in our community need to have both a valid driver's license and motor vehicle insurance; they must also be required to abide by all the rules of the road that the State of Minnesota has. A law providing for such legal driver's licenses will reduce accidents and provide liability, both of which will be significant contributions to the State. There is no doubt that if the State is not going to deport individuals, that providing them with training such as road tests is absolutely necessary to help protect all of our residents." – **Ron Gaurude Winona County Sheriff**

"It is a public safety as well as a fairness issue that immigrants who reside, work, and raise their children in our community are denied the opportunity to become licensed drivers simply because of their immigration status. It is a small step in immigration reform, but a huge leap in public safety policy and reducing the costs to society to allow such immigrants to apply for a driver's license. Statistics show that

PHONE: (507) 453-3646 • FAX: (507) 457-0519

WEBSITE: WWW.WINONACOUNTYCJCC.ORG

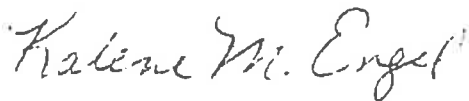
E-MAIL: KALENE@WINONACOUNTYCJCC.ORG

RE: CJCC Letter of Support
February 25, 2015

unlicensed drivers account for a majority of motor vehicle accidents resulting in serious injuries and fatalities. As a society, we end up paying the resulting medical and property damage costs of these accidents. Drivers who are licensed having met the driver's education requirements, passed the written and behind the wheel tests, and who are properly insured, increase public safety on the road for all of us, enhance law enforcement's ability to do their jobs, and reduce costs to society."-**Karin Sonneman, Winona County Attorney and Chair of CJCC**

As you can see, from the above statements, the CJCC strongly supports the spirit and letter of changes in the driver's licensing law to enhance public safety as proposed in House File 97 and Senate File 224 so that all Minnesota residents have the opportunity to legally obtain a driver's license in the State of Minnesota. It is our position that votes cast in favor of these bills will result in a safer Minnesota.

Sincerely,



Kalene Engel, Executive Director of the Winona County CJCC

cc: CJCC Council Membership, as listed below:
Ron Ganrude, Winona County Sheriff
Sally Cumiskey, Winona County Court Administrator
Fatima Said, Executive Director of Project FINE
Karin Sonneman, Winona County Attorney and CJCC Chair
Carmaine Sturino, Public Defender Representative of CJCC
Jeff Apse, Supt. - Lewiston-Altura Public Schools
Paul Bostrack, Winona Police Chief
Steve Buswell, Winona County Jail Administrator
Hon. Nancy Buytendorp, District Court Judge
Mike Flaherty, Asst. City of Winona Attorney
Judy Gilow, Public Member of CJCC
Maureen Holte, Interim Winona County Administrator
Justin Green, Public Member of CJCC
Gerry Krage, Winona City Council Member
Rená Patterson, Dist. Supervisor, Minnesota Dept. of Corrections
Kurt Knuesel, President - Winona County Bar Association
Marie Kovecsi, Winona County Commissioner
Kent Russell, City of Goodview Police Chief
Sharon Summers, Supervisor - Winona Community Services
Dr. Stephen West, Supt. - Winona Area Public Schools

Resolution No. 6808

Support for HF 97, Minnesota Driver's License for All

WHEREAS, House File 97 amends requirements governing driver's licenses to no longer require a social security number, and

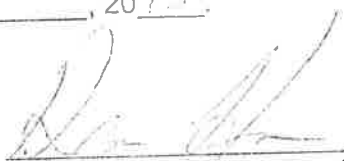
WHEREAS, upon providing proof of residency within the State of Minnesota, and

WHEREAS, upon providing acceptable forms of proof of identification, all residents of Minnesota may apply for a Minnesota Driver's License.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that in the interests of Public Safety, these measures will allow for the testing and verification of driving skills, and proper identification of vehicle operators within the State of Minnesota, and

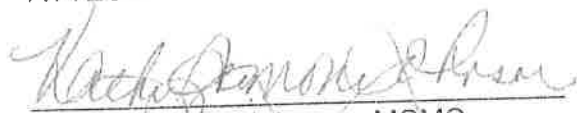
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Red Wing, having duly considered the effects of this bill, do hereby support its passing based on the Public Safety interests identified above.

Adopted this 9th day of March, 2015.



Dean Hove, Council President

ATTEST:


Kathy Seymour Johnson, MCMC
City Clerk

(seal)

Presented to the Mayor at 10:53 p.m. on this 9th day of March, 2015.

Approved this 9th day of March, 2015.



Daniel D. Bender, Mayor



Lakeville Police Department

Positioned to Thrive

Jeff Long, Chief of Police

March 09, 2015

Minnesota Legislature
100 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard,
St Paul, MN 55155

RE: HF97/SF224

Honorable Legislators,

Thank you for your leadership in bringing forth HF97/SF224. I am writing to express my support and full endorsement for HF97/SF224, which will allow all Minnesota residents to obtain a Minnesota driver's license, regardless of their immigration status.

My endorsement supports a plan that requires drivers, without proof of a previous driving license in another country, to complete the same driver education course(s), prior to taking the "behind the wheel test", any other new driver in the state is subject to. By doing so, we can ensure that everyone driving on our roadways is knowledgeable of our traffic regulations, enhancing the safety of our roads.

As law enforcement officers, we often see uninsured and unlicensed drivers at accident scenes. The Insurance Federation of Minnesota estimates that approximately 20% of drivers do not carry insurance. The estimate climbs to a much higher level for undocumented immigrants who cannot obtain auto insurance without a valid driver's license. With many accidents involving an unlicensed driver, the importance of this bill is clear.

In addition to the benefit of allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain auto insurance by having a license, it is important for officers to be able to properly identify the drivers of the vehicles they stop. Without a license, this becomes a very time consuming incident for our officers and takes away their time from other important tasks.

My hope is that HF97/SF224 will make our state roadways safe for all drivers, decrease the number of uninsured drivers, and ensure officer's time is well utilized. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Jeff Long

City of Lakeville Police Chief



**WILLMAR POLICE DEPARTMENT
CHIEF OF POLICE**

2201 23rd ST. NE
Suite 102
WILLMAR, MN 56201-9566
320-214-6700; 320-235-2244 V/TDD
FAX 320-231-6556

March 10, 2015

Representative Baker:

Thank you for your leadership in supporting legislation that concerns the public safety of Minnesota. I understand that in 2002, there was a change in the rules governing driver's licenses which resulted in restricting driving privileges to only U.S. citizens and legal residents. I am aware that there is bipartisan legislation currently introduced that would reinstate the ability for all drivers in Minnesota to apply for a driver's license, regardless of immigration status.

Allowing all residents to apply for a driver's license will help ensure that more people driving on our roads pass an exam, demonstrating knowledge of our traffic laws and regulations and proficiency with behind the wheel testing. It can also improve the likelihood of more drivers carrying auto insurance through ease of obtaining it with a state issued license.

As law enforcement, it is important that residents have a state issued identification which includes their address. Under this law, residents will be able to obtain driver's licenses, which would allow officers to more easily identify the people they are encountering. This will also help law enforcement identify victims of crimes and assist in identifying people in medical emergencies or patients in traffic crashes.

A number of states have prioritized public safety by passing laws allowing their residents to apply for a driver's license regardless of their status. I understand that, according to the proposed legislation, the requirements to obtain a driver's license without a social security number will be very stringent. I support this measure because I believe it will result in more licensed, insured drivers on our roads and thereby enhance public safety.

I support the passing of HF97/SF224 so that we can make our state a better and safer Minnesota, and I hope the legislature will as well. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Chief Jim Felt
Willmar Police Department



Woodbury Public Safety



POLICE · EMS · FIRE

March 12, 2015

Senator Bobby Joe Champion
306 Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Representative Rod Hamilton
443 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: HF97/SF224 Legislation to reinstate all drivers in Minnesota to apply for driver's licenses regardless of immigration status

Honorable Legislators,

I am writing this letter in support of legislation to allow drivers to apply for a driver's license regardless of immigration status. As public safety director and police chief for the City of Woodbury, I have had the opportunity to see first hand how our current traffic code is ill equipped to effectively deal with this issue. It is my belief that by allowing all drivers to apply for a driver's license, our roads will be safer for everyone.

By allowing all drivers to apply for a driver's license we will increase the number of drivers who have passed an examination demonstrating knowledge of our traffic laws and regulations. It will also assist law enforcement in correctly identifying drivers with a state issued identification. This will allow police to work more efficiently and safely while enhancing the public safety on our roadways.

I understand that in 2002, there was a change in the rules governing driver's licenses that resulted in restricting driving privileges to only U.S. citizens and legal residents. I am aware that there is bipartisan legislation currently introduced that would reinstate the ability for all drivers in Minnesota to apply for a driver's license regardless of immigration status.

A number of states have already passed laws allowing their residents to apply for a driver's license regardless of their immigration status. I believe the time is right for Minnesota to enact similar legislation that includes stringent requirements to obtain a driver's license without a social security number. I believe this measure will result in more licensed drivers on our roads and will thereby enhance public safety.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue and please accept my endorsement of HF97/SF224. I believe this legislation will help make a better and safer Minnesota. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,


Lee Vague

Public Safety Director/ Police Chief

Helpful · Effective · Looking Ahead · Professional
2100 Radio Drive · Woodbury · Minnesota · 55125-9598
(651) 714-3600 · Fax (651) 714-3708
www.ci.woodbury.mn.us



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

Police Department

Janeé L. Harteau
Chief of Police
350 South 5th Street - Room 130
Minneapolis MN 55415-1389

612 673 2735
TTY 612 673 2157

March 19, 2015

Honorable Senators:

The City of Minneapolis and I, as Police Chief, are supportive of SF 224 to expand eligibly for MN Drivers Licenses to allow information regarding the applicant to be gathered from an identification card issued by a government other than the United States.

This is a public safety issue for our city and state that affects us all. The passage of this bill will create a safer environment and healthier communities. By expanding the eligibility it will add to the number of insured drivers on the road, while protecting the civil rights of all our residents. By allowing individuals to use identification cards issued by other governments, we are allowing individuals to become properly trained behind the wheel and thus directly decrease the number of accidents on the road.

We all win when local governments collaborate with the immigrant communities. We all win when roads are safer and more drivers are insured. We all win when we pass SF 224.

Sincerely,

Janeé L. Harteau
Chief of Police



www.minneapolismn.gov
Affirmative Action Employer

