

March 24, 2015

**We, members and leaders of Minnesota's faith communities, support the bi-partisan HF97, Driver's license and Minnesota identification card legislation (and its companion bill SF224).** As faith leaders and caregivers of thousands of Minnesota residents we declare this legislation essential to our state's well being and a necessity for the public safety of all Minnesota residents. We urge the members of the Minnesota legislature to vote for HF97 (and for its companion legislation, SF224).

Though representing communities with differing traditions, we are united as Minnesotans with a shared goal of creating safe and welcoming communities. We are humbled and cautioned by the challenges this presents, our histories reminding us both of the power of welcome as well as how it feels to be treated as outsiders. HF97 will help Minnesota become a more welcoming state by providing a lawful means for all eligible Minnesotans to become properly trained, insured and licensed for the privilege of driving.

Our communities are home to thousands of Minnesota residents who, with this legislation, will become better equipped to safely provide for their families, support the schooling of their children, seek a doctor's care, and participate in the life of their faith communities.

Communities excluded from the process of getting a drivers license are marginalized and come to distrust local law enforcement. They are fearful of contact with police and are reluctant to come forward either to seek aid or to offer testimony as witnesses to crimes. HF97 removes this barrier to the community policing efforts of local law enforcement and improves the public safety and security of all.

In the Northwest Foundation funded report for the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce and the Minnesota Immigrant Business Coalition, it is reported that all immigrants, authorized and unauthorized, "pay an estimated \$793 million per year in state and local taxes in Minnesota." This legislation will also help create a stronger Minnesota economy. HF97 recognizes that all Minnesota's residents are stakeholders in and contributors to our state's prosperity.

We therefore urge the Minnesota legislature to pass HF97 (and its companion SF224).

Respectfully,

Rev. Peg Chamberlain, Executive Director, Minnesota Council of Churches

Bishop Bruce R. Ough, Dakotas-Minnesota Area of The United Methodist Church

Bishop Ann Svennungsen, Minneapolis Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church In America

Jason Adkins, Minnesota Catholic Conference Executive Director

Vic Rosenthal, Executive Director, Jewish Community Action

Rabbi Morris Allen, Beth Jacob Congregation

Colleen Beebe, Attorney, Co-Director, Simpson Center for Servant Ministry, Simpson United Methodist Church

Rev. Luisa Cabello-Hansel, Co-Pastor, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Minneapolis

Rev. Patrick Cabello-Hansel, Co-Pastor, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Minneapolis

Rabbi Alexander Davis, Beth El Synagogue

Rabbi Amy Eilberg

Rev. Paul Erickson, Executive Director, Agora (a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)

Susie George, Immigration Team Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ

Rev. John Guttermann, Lead, Conversations With Friends (an interfaith ministry)

Diane Haines, Immigration Team, Mayflower Congregational United Church of Christ

Rabbi Michael Latz, Shir Tikvah Congregation

Rev. Bob Munneke, Immigration Task Force, Northeast Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Jesus Purisaca, M.Div., Co-Director, Simpson Center for Servant Ministry, Simpson United Methodist Church

Rabbi David Wirtschafter