



IDs and Birth Certificates

Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels. Hebrews 13:2

The Texas Conference of Catholic Bishops opposes efforts that hinder immigrants' ability to obtain Texas drivers' licenses and IDs or birth certificates for immigrants' citizen children.

Recent studies indicate Texas has nearly one million workers who cannot legally obtain drivers' licenses or insure their vehicles because current law requires proof of citizenship or a personal identification certificate before an application can be made.

Nevertheless, these unlicensed drivers regularly operate vehicles to get to work, shop, or care for their families, thus creating a problem of uninsured and untrained drivers on our streets. Prohibiting these residents from getting a driver's permit punishes and excludes some of the most valuable and hardworking people in our communities, and does not achieve the stated purpose of making our communities more secure or law abiding.

Regardless of a person's immigration status, the community is safer when drivers have completed

training and test requirements, and when residents are registered in the system so that the state can keep better track of who is driving.


All children born in the United States are citizens by right of birth. To deny any such citizen a birth certificate is an act of oppression and a violation of a basic human right. As Catholics and Christians we cannot support such acts.


Texas bishops support legislation to establish a provisional Texas resident driver's permit for undocumented immigrants, providing them with the ability to drive legally in Texas after they successfully pass a driving test, buy insurance, undergo a criminal background check, and prove state residency.


The bishops oppose efforts to amend the U.S. and the Texas constitutions to restrict automatic citizenship for native born children of immigrants because it would effectively leave the children stateless.


Where we stand


The TCCB has reviewed the following legislation for the 85th Texas Legislature:

 **HB 580** prohibits refugees from using driver's licenses for employment or public benefits. The TCCB opposes this bill which denies access to benefits that refugees currently have and need to become self-sufficient.

 **HB 826** requires the comptroller to compile an annual comprehensive financial analysis of the impact of undocumented immigrants on the state budget and economy. The TCCB supports this bill because it addresses both the costs and contributions of immigrants to the economy.

 **SB 85** requires the use of E-verify for state contractors and grant recipients and authorizes suspension of licenses by private employers who hire undocumented workers. The TCCB opposes this bill because of the high error rate of the E-verify program.

 **SB 168** increases the immigration law, use of force, and cultural sensitivity training requirements for all forces assigned to patrol the border. The TCCB supports this bill to improve law enforcement training for those serving the Texas border region.

 **SB 254** would withhold contracts from businesses which could delay the state's construction projects and delay revenue that would have been generated through the projects. The TCCB opposes this bill because the potential economic harm to the state's economy appears to outweigh the minimal benefits this bill seeks to achieve.

You can find more information on the Texas Conference of Catholic Bishops' policy priorities at www.txccatholic.org/public-policy.

