By allowing undocumented residents to apply for a standard Massachusetts driver's license, the Commonwealth would be promoting safer roads by testing the training of drivers and requiring insurance, stimulating economic growth from immigrants' increased participation in the workforce as well as increased Registration of Motor Vehicle and revenue, and more effectively utilizing the state's resources such as policing and costs related to accidents involving uninsured drivers. Several of these effects have been experienced in the 12 states that have already enacted similar legislation.

### The Bill
S.2061/H.3012: An Act relative to work and family mobility

### Elevator Speech
My name is Hannah and this is Jacqie, and we are students at Brandeis University, and we are also two of the hundreds of thousands of drivers that take to the roads of Massachusetts every day. As a society, we take incredible measures to ensure the safety of those on the road, but there is more that we could do to prevent unsafe road conditions and decrease hit-and-runs in order to protect the residents of this Commonwealth. Undocumented people are unable to apply for licenses, but must use cars in order to work and support their families – they, like most other Massachusetts residents, need to take their kids to school and doctor's appointments, to buy groceries, and to get to their jobs. It isn't just about road safety – it's about the wellbeing of the people of the Commonwealth.

This inability to apply for licenses leads to more untrained drivers on the roads and higher rates of hit-and-run accidents because undocumented residents fear being detained without a license. Bill S.2061/H.3012, An act relative to work and family mobility, if passed, will allow all residents to obtain a standard driver's license, and the 200,000 undocumented residents in Massachusetts will be able to be trained and licensed drivers; providing more security for all individuals and families residing in the Commonwealth. This could decrease the number of hit-and-runs and lower insurance rates for all MA residents.

In California, where they passed a similar bill, likelihood of hit and run accidents has been reduced by 10%, thereby improving traffic safety and reducing costs for California drivers. Providing unauthorized immigrants with access to driver's licenses can create positive externalities for the

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**Hannah Glock and Jacqie Wycoff**
communities in which they live. There is now a distinction between standard and REAL-ID compliant licenses, which means the licenses that undocumented immigrants would be able to apply for under this bill would not provide them with the same benefits as those that could be obtained by legal residents. This bill has been proposed many times before, so we urge you to have a hearing on this bill ASAP, because now, more than ever before, is the time to pass this bill.

■ Excerpts from Storybook

“60% of the people deported from the United States are originally detained on traffic violations. Not having a license is one of the biggest sources of fear in this community; it ruins lives. However, they have to drive, and they are driving — they have jobs to go to and families to support. A license would make the roads safer, and give these immigrants a valid form of identification. Without that, you can’t go to the bank, pick up your child from school, or even go to a hospital without issue,” – Douglas Smith, the Legal Program Director at The Right to Immigration Institute

“Maria* lives in Massachusetts with her two young daughters after fleeing the dangers of their home country. Even though Maria was once an independent, affluent business woman, she struggles to find employment in her community because of a lack of transportation Maria must rely on unreliable public transportation, and as her health declines, it is becoming more difficult for her to get to doctor appointments, the pharmacy, and even the grocery store to support her family. Her children are not immune to the effects of this burden either. When her youngest daughter was injured at school, Maria could not drive her directly to the hospital, and the school was forced to call an ambulance, placing yet another burden on a family that is already fighting to stay afloat. For Maria and her family, the ability to obtain a driver’s license would provide them with the sense of health, financial, and personal security that they came to the United States to find.”

* Maria’s name has been changed.

“Robert* is a student at Brandeis University who is a legal citizen in the U.S., but both his mother and his father are undocumented immigrants from Mexico. When Robert was in high school, he applied for and received his driver’s permit, which was his first form of legal ID. One day, his father tried to buy allergy medicine, but was not able to due to a regulation that required the pharmacy to check a legal form of ID before selling the medication to a customer. Because neither his father nor his mother had a legal form of ID to show, they had to return to the pharmacy with their son, who was able to use his driver’s permit as ID to purchase the medicine. Robert recalls being able to ‘sense [his father’s]
hurt of being rejected,’ especially because it was ‘just’ a basic allergy medication.”

* Robert’s name has been changed.

■ Op-Ed

Hannah

Driver’s Licenses for Undocumented Immigrants; Benefit for all

Your friends. Your neighbors. Your coworkers. These are all people who may be unable to obtain any form of identification. In Massachusetts, residents unable to provide proof of lawful residence are currently not allowed to obtain driver’s licenses. It may be easy to forget how important identification is in your life, but it isn’t for those who don’t have that luxury. You need a license to drive legally – to drive your child to school, to drive to the hospital, and to drive to work – and you need identification to get allergy medication, to enter federal buildings, and to open a bank account. These people who are unable to obtain identification are active members of your community and economy. They are people who have children and families they must support. They are people you see every day. They are people.

Our federal immigration system is broken – and there doesn’t seem to be a comprehensive immigration reform anywhere in sight. Until reform occurs, states are left to decide how to provide for the millions of undocumented immigrants who are a part of their communities and their workforce. In Massachusetts, estimates indicate that over 250,000 undocumented immigrants reside in the state. That’s 250,000 Massachusetts residents who have jobs, who pay taxes, and who have families to support. Many of these residents live in the suburbs, where people must rely on cars to get to work and school. Legislation allowing undocumented immigrants receive driver’s licenses has been passed in a dozen states and the District of Columbia, and now it’s time for Massachusetts to do the same.

Bill S.2061/H.3012, An act relative to work and family mobility, if passed, will allow undocumented residents to apply for and obtain standard driver’s licenses. Allowing undocumented residents the opportunity to obtain a license will not provide them with any additional public benefits, besides simply the ability to become trained, licensed, and insured drivers, and to have a valid form of identification.

The inability to apply for licenses means there are more untrained drivers on the roads and higher rates of hit-and-run accidents because undocumented residents fear being detained or even deported without a license. In California, where they passed a similar bill, likelihood of hit and run accidents decreased by 10%, thereby improving traffic safety and reducing costs for California drivers.
Massachusetts prides itself on providing equal opportunity for all, but fails to do so for these people who live, work, and raise their families in Massachusetts. One in twenty children in the Commonwealth live with at least one adult who is unauthorized to drive. Children’s healthy and happy upbringing is dependent on their parent’s ability to provide for them, and current law forbids many parents from having the opportunity to fully provide for their children. Massachusetts is failing these families.

Some opponents say that Massachusetts should not make it easier for undocumented immigrants to work jobs they are not supposed to have. But make no mistake – just because many of these people are not licensed to drive, that does not mean that they are not driving. Driving, especially in Massachusetts, is a necessity for most individuals and families. Undocumented people, like all other residents, must use cars in order to work and support their families – they, too, need to take their kids to school and doctor’s appointments, to buy groceries, and to get to their jobs. Instead, however, they are driving in constant fear.

One thing we can all agree on is that Massachusetts roads should be safe for all – but unfortunately Massachusetts does not allow every driver to be tested, licensed, and insured. An Act relative to work and family mobility is the solution. The passage of this bill would provide more security for all individuals and families residing in the Commonwealth. It would make our communities safer, our economy stronger, and our families healthier. If you agree that children should have to ability to live in households with parents who are given the opportunity to fully provide for them, and want each Massachusetts driver to be licensed, registered, and insured, support S.2061/H.3012. Call or write a letter to your local state legislator today.

Jacqie

Get This Kid to the Hospital

You just went inside to prepare lunch for your children. As you take out the plates, you hear a THUMP and a shout quickly after. Running outside, you see one of your children nursing his ankle while sitting in the grass with another busted-up knee. You swiftly carry your child inside, cleaning him up and trying to tend to wounds. After a few minutes, the tears have mostly subsided as he takes comfort in your care; however, this is also when you realize that a few bandages and ice packs may not be enough to remedy the situation. A trip to the emergency room is going to be necessary, and you gather some belongings: your purse, your child’s favorite blanket, a book for your other child. As you drive to the hospital, there is a pit in your stomach as you fear what your child may have to face – it’s all you can think about. How much more terrified would you be if you had no choice but to drive illegally?

Under the current law in Massachusetts, immigrants living in the state without proper documentation are prohibited from applying for a driver’s license. However, over 200,000 undocumented immigrants currently reside in Massachusetts, contributing to their communities and the Commonwealth at large. They need to be able to support themselves, their families, and their communities by driving without a license, though they face enormous risks, up to deportation, should they be stopped on the way to work or the supermarket. Beyond the roads, disallowance of licenses still bars these residents and their families from accessing fundamental services. Driver’s licenses are basic form of identification. Without a license, many immigrants do not have any means of identification, meaning they do not have any means to open bank accounts, obtain insurance, or even buy prescription medications. Nowadays, identification is even required in order to pick up your kids from school.

One in twenty children in Massachusetts live with at least one undocumented adult (American Immigration Council 2017), and many of these children are United States citizens. These prohibitions affect not only non-licensed adults, but their entire family. They are families who have built lives and planted roots here in Massachusetts, whom you know as your colleagues, neighbors, and friends. However, right now the movement to allow undocumented immigrants to apply for driver’s licenses is stronger than ever, and a proposal for this change is seen in the bill An Act relative to work and family mobility (S.2061/H.3012). As Massachusetts transitions to REAL IDs, federal identification cards that require more proof of identity to acquire, this bill proposes that undocumented people should be eligible to apply for standard Massachusetts licenses. If the bill were to be implemented into law, the main differences between a standard license and a REAL ID would be that a standard license would not require a social security number to apply for, but it would not give the same benefits as a REAL ID, such as the ability to enter federal building or board a domestic flight.

Massachusetts is teetering on the brink of this transition, while other states have already seen tremendous impact by giving licenses to qualified undocumented immigrants. In California, the Immigration Policy Lab found that there was a ten percent decrease in hit-and-run accidents after this bill was passed. These residents are already driving, but when people are licensed, the state can ensure that they are doing so safely, with training and insurance. Relatedly, in Colorado, residents experienced savings of about $30 million in out-of-pocket insurance expenses after this bill became law. With a similar undocumented immigrant population to that of Colorado, it is not unreasonable that Massachusetts residents could see similar savings (Colorado Fiscal Institute 2015). Twelve states across the country have already implemented such laws, and New York and New Jersey are currently in the
process of trying to pass these bills because of the benefits they predict for the future of their own states.

An investment in this movement, in this bill, in these families, is an investment in the future of Massachusetts and all of the residents of the Commonwealth. Over 200,000 people need to go to work, buy groceries, receive their medications, and pick up their children from school. Get in touch with your local representative. Ask them– Are you supporting An Act relative to work and family mobility (S.2061)?

Because a parent shouldn’t have to worry about getting their kid to the hospital.

■ House Ways & Means Script

We urge you to push through Bill S.2061/H.3012, An Act relative to work and family mobility, which would allow undocumented residents to become licensed drivers in the Commonwealth to apply for and obtain standard Massachusetts driver’s licenses. This bill will make Massachusetts roads safer by ensuring that every driver can become trained, licensed, and insured. This will decrease the number of hit-and-runs, lower insurance rates for all Massachusetts residents, and increase local and state governments’ revenue.

Bill S.2061/H.3012 is by no means radical nor a new concept – it has been proposed several times before in the MA legislature, and similar bills which allow residents to apply for driver’s licenses regardless of immigration status have passed in twelve other states and the District of Columbia. This bill would improve the Commonwealth’s public safety and economy, just as it has in other states such as California, Colorado, and Vermont. Allowing undocumented residents to apply for a Massachusetts standard license will increase the number of registered and insured drivers on the roads, increase state revenue due to the profits gained from these processes, lower residents’ insurance payments, and allow state and local police to use their resources more efficiently within their communities.

According to a Colorado Fiscal Institute study from 2015, the economic benefits of providing licenses to all immigrants far outweigh the administrative costs of the program. Current legal residents of Massachusetts would financially benefit from allowing undocumented people to become licensed drivers, as would the economy of the Commonwealth as a whole. When this law was changed in Colorado, drivers who had already been insured saw savings that ranged up to $29.5 million in insurance premiums each year, and insurance companies saw an annual increase of $113 million increase in revenue. Revenues for state and local governments would also increase by $5.3 to $6.9 million due to an increase of residents taking the driver’s test and registering their vehicles with the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles. With Colorado’s estimated 200,000 undocumented immigrants, as compared to Massachusetts’ 210,000, we can expect to see similar economic benefits in the Commonwealth.

While some may argue that there may be administrative costs associated with a slight uptick in license applicants, the revenue gained from the increase in residents paying into the system will certainly offset these costs, and result in a gross net gain in state and local revenues. This bill should also result in a decrease in average insurance payments due to a decrease in car accidents, given the fact that more less people on the road will be forced to drive without a license, and they will therefore have the opportunity to be trained to drive safely on the road of Massachusetts. Some who oppose this bill suggest that passing it would result in an influx of undocumented immigrants into Massachusetts from surrounding states, but this has not occurred in any of the states where it has been passed, including bordering states such as Vermont and Connecticut. Granting undocumented immigrants’ driver’s licenses also allows police officers to save time and money, as they would no longer have to allocate resources to detaining and filing ultimately inconsequential paperwork for people who would otherwise simply be fined for minor infractions. When officers catch undocumented immigrants driving without licenses, they often must impound the vehicle and spend their valuable time filling out and filing paperwork. If, instead, these residents were able to become trained, licensed drivers, the roads would be safer and the Policemen would have more time and resources to keep Massachusetts communities safe from those committing real crimes.

In California, where a similar bill was passed, the likelihood of hit-and-run accidents has been reduced by 10%, thereby improving traffic safety and reducing costs for California drivers. The Immigration Policy Lab estimates that about 4,000 hit-and-run accidents were prevented in California because of this bill, and $3.5 million out-of-pocket expenses were saved because more drivers were able to get car insurance. Because of the Massachusetts “no-fault” car insurance laws, drivers affected by hit and run accidents or accidents with people without insurance of their own, the party not at fault would not be responsible for out of pocket costs, however, their insurance company is still impacted by the burden of the incident, each time testing the strength of the Massachusetts economy. If more drivers were able to be insured, costs would be transferred to at-fault drivers’ insurance in the case of a car accident, which would lower overall insurance rates, thereby maintaining the strength of our economy.

Providing undocumented immigrants with access to driver’s licenses will continue to create positive externalities for the communities in which they live. Each time they are able to legally drive to work, each resident is able to contribute
to the great workforce of Massachusetts, stimulating our economy. Each time they are able to bring their children to school, they are helping to raise the minds that will help the Commonwealth flourish tomorrow. This bill does not allow these residents to receive public benefit or do anything beyond what they were doing before, but it will allow them to contribute to Massachusetts legally.

As someone who supports bills pertaining to traffic safety, children's welfare, and the right to equal healthcare, we urge you to move forward to push this bill through, as the financial and social benefits far outweigh any menial costs.

Following the passage of new legislation in 2016, there is now a distinction between standard and REAL-ID compliant licenses, which means the licenses that undocumented immigrants would be able to apply for under this bill would not provide them with the same benefits as those that could be obtained by legal residents. This bill has been proposed many times before, so we urge you to push to have a hearing on this bill as soon as possible, because now, more than ever before, is the time to pass this bill. In addition to making Massachusetts roads safer and stimulating the economy, Bill S.2061/H.3012 will increase local and state governments' revenue and decrease insurance payments for every driver in Massachusetts.

Regards,
Hannah Glock & Jacqie Wycoff

Letter to the Legislator
Dear Senator Barrett,

We are writing to you to urge you to push through Bill S.2061/H.3012. An Act relative to work and family mobility, which would allow undocumented residents within the Commonwealth to apply for and obtain standard Massachusetts driver's licenses. This act will make Massachusetts roads safe by ensuring that every driver can become trained, licensed, and insured. This could decrease the number of hit-and-runs and lower insurance rates for all Massachusetts residents, which will make Massachusetts roads safer for all drivers.

This bill is incredibly important to us and those in our community, and we have seen the impacts of living without a license first-hand. The regulation that restricts undocumented immigrants from obtaining licenses affects every person within the Commonwealth to some extent. Those who cannot legally obtain licenses are people with jobs, families, and responsibilities that require them to use a car. Whether it's taking their kids to school, driving them to work, or rushing a family member to the hospital, driving in Massachusetts is a necessity, no matter a person's immigration status. Additionally, allowing all qualified drivers to become trained, licensed, and insured, would provide more security and safety for all individuals and families residing in the Commonwealth. This could decrease the number of hit-and-runs and lower insurance rates for all Massachusetts residents.

A local mother in our community told us a story of an instance in which her young daughter was injured at school and she could not drive her to the hospital, which meant the school had to call an ambulance, which placed a huge financial burden on the family. She also struggles to find employment in her community because of a lack of reliable public transportation.

When California passed a similar bill, the likelihood of hit and run accidents in the state has been reduced by 10%, thereby improving traffic safety and reducing costs for California drivers. Providing unauthorized immigrants with access to driver's licenses can create positive externalities for the communities in which they live. As a member of the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security, we know that residents' safety matters to you; and this bill would increase the safety of the people of the Commonwealth and allow Police to use their resources more efficiently within their communities. Following legislation passed in 2016, there is now a distinction between standard and REAL-ID compliant licenses: state residents will have two options for their driver's license or ID card: a REAL-ID-compliant one, or a standard Massachusetts state license. Undocumented immigrants would be able to apply for under this bill would not provide them with the same benefits as those that could be obtained by legal residents. This bill has been proposed many times before, so we urge you to have a hearing on this bill as soon as possible, because now, more than ever before, is the time to pass this bill.

Sincerely,
Hannah Glock & Jacqie Wycoff

Excerpts from Campaign Journals
Hannah
On Meeting with a Student with Personal connection to the bill
After reaching out to a number of different people – friends, peers, classmates – I was connected to someone who had a story to tell. This person, whose name I will keep confidential, is a student at Brandeis whose parents are undocumented. While he, himself, is a citizen, his parents' lack of citizenship affected his childhood in a number of ways. He found it difficult to ever feel entirely safe, for his parents feared deportation or fines if ever getting caught by the police. He described a specific situation, in which his parents were involved in a minor car accident that was the fault of the other driver – and because they remained at the scene, they
were heavily fined for not having an ID. In another instance, his parents were unable to get allergy medication, which happened to require showing an ID, until he was old enough to have his own valid form of ID – his driver’s permit.

Hearing this story changed the way I looked at the bill entirely. As a generally analytically-minded person, I was looking at the bill as something that was logical for x, y, and z reasons – but this wasn’t so simple. This was a bill that was affecting real people – real children, even – and facts and figures didn’t say anything next to the stories of real people with real hardships. The most striking part of this story was how much the issue affected not only undocumented residents, but also their children and family members. Families were suffering because of the law, and the bill could change that.

I found that following this meeting, and after hearing other stories, I was motivated to advocate for this bill for the right reason – because I cared. Finally understanding who and what we are fighting for made all the difference. Legislators respond to people and their stories, and now, I had stories to share.

Jacqie

On Meeting with Senator Crighton

My partner, Hannah Glock, and I met with Senator Crighton during our first visit to the Statehouse with our class, as we all met with the sponsors of our bills to establish a greater understanding of the context and idiosyncrasies we may not have been able to fully explore in our research. Stretched thin, as policymakers often are, Senator Crighton arrived a bit after our conversation had already begun with his legislative aide, Dulce Gonzalez, who is spearheading his office’s efforts regarding An Act relative to work and family mobility. We connected first over schooling and career interests, then found ways to integrate our intentions with this advocacy project into the conversation – this is beyond a ‘school project,’ and I believe this ultimately led to a more meaningful conversation about advocacy after the Senator arrived. After enthusiastic introductions, we were able to ask the Senator about why the bill meant so much to him for this particular session, and he was able to explain to us more of the more political circumstances that made this bill more timely than ever, demonstrating the importance of attaining first-hand information. Listening to him speak so eloquently about this bill in ways that were personal, logical, and compelling all at the same time made me feel as though he was a good model for advocating this bill and structuring arguments for it. During our conversations, I believe the Senator was impressed with the amount of research we had done and the complexities we were familiar with on the bill already, and again, this investment certainly aided in creating a more productive conversation overall. However, this meeting also made it very clear what our weak spots were in our knowledge of the bill. As the Senator pointed out, any counter-argument for this bill can be rationally argued against, but we realized that without the facts, research, or evidence to establish an argument, we would not be fulfilling our full potential as advocates. Overall, meeting with Senator Crighton and legislative aide Dulce Gonzalez helped us to take a closer look at our own work, and while they were also unaware of a full coalition backing the bill (only individual organizations), they emphatically encouraged us to continue our advocacy work by meeting with policymakers and reaching out if we wanted.

Update

As of August 11: There has been no action taken on this bill.

For more information

View the bill (MA legislature website):
S.2061: https://malegislature.gov/Bills/191/S2061
H.3012: https://malegislature.gov/Bills/191/H3012

Organization or Coalition support:
Cosecha: https://www.lahuelga.com
MIRA: http://miracoalition.org
32BJ: https://www.seiu32bj.org/districts/new-england-615/