

## Governor Quinn Signs Historic Traffic Safety Legislation

Written by Ryan C. Woods  
Monday, 28 January 2013 16:31

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### Law Will Allow All Motorists to Be Properly Licensed and Insured

CHICAGO – January 27, 2013. Governor Pat Quinn today was joined by legislators, community leaders and public safety advocates to sign into law a bill that will help ensure every Illinois motorist is properly licensed to drive. An estimated 250,000 immigrant motorists are on Illinois roads today, and these unlicensed drivers present a serious, but preventable safety risk to all Illinois drivers. Governor Quinn was an early supporter of this key legislation, which is part of his agenda to improve traffic safety in Illinois and lead the nation in welcoming and including our immigrant population.

“Driving means taking responsibility for your safety and the safety of others on the road,” Governor Quinn said. “Despite the stalemate on immigration reform in Washington D.C., Illinois is moving forward. This common sense law will help everybody, regardless of their background, learn the rules of the road, pass a driving test and get insurance. As a result, our roads will be safer, we will create more access to job opportunities and our economic growth will be strengthened.”

Senate Bill 957, sponsored by Senate President John Cullerton (D-Chicago) and Rep. Edward Acevedo (D-Chicago), allows the Secretary of State to issue temporary driver’s licenses to applicants who have resided in Illinois for more than a year but who are not eligible for a social security number. In order to receive a temporary license, an applicant must pass a driving safety test and carry auto insurance. The driver’s license cannot be used as official identification and can be revoked if a license-holder is found not carrying insurance.

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"I congratulate the communities, organizations and the legislators who joined this strong coalition for highway safety. I want to thank Governor Quinn for signing this bill to make our roads safer by ensuring that all drivers are trained, tested and insured," said President Cullerton, the chief Senate sponsor of the bill.

"This legislation is long overdue and is a step towards making our roads safer and providing insurance to all drivers," Rep. Acevedo said.

According to the Illinois Highway Safety Coalition, unlicensed, uninsured drivers are involved in almost 80,000 accidents in Illinois each year, resulting in \$660 million in damage. Unlicensed immigrant drivers cost \$64 million in damage claims alone. If half of the estimated 250,000 unlicensed immigrants are properly licensed and insured, Illinois insurance policy holders would save an estimated \$46 million a year in premiums. Nationwide, unlicensed motorists are five times likelier to be involved in a fatal crash than licensed drivers.

"Now that this legislation has passed the General Assembly and Governor Quinn has signed it into law, it is my office's responsibility to implement it in a way that improves road safety and underscores the importance of license integrity and security," Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White said. "At its core, this law will make the roads safer for everyone. I want to reassure the public that my office will implement this law, in approximately 10 months, thoughtfully, efficiently and effectively. We will ensure that the TVDL is a safe and secure document. This law will improve road safety and will guarantee that more drivers will purchase and maintain auto insurance."

"Today is a proud day for our immigrant community, who have been fighting for driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants for the last 13 years," ICIRR's CEO Lawrence Benito said. "The signing of today's law sends a clear signal - our country is ready to unite in a bipartisan manner to pass a humane immigration reform that includes a pathway to citizenship."

Studies have shown immigrants who can drive legally are more likely to work, spend and contribute to the economy. Having a driver's license provides greater access to job opportunities and drives business activity and growth. This legislation passed the General Assembly with strong bipartisan majorities and the support of minority leadership in both

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chambers.

“As Congress continues to debate immigration policy and reform, today in Illinois we take a monumental step to recognize the needs of many hard-working immigrants already living here and contributing so much to our great state,” said House Minority Leader Tom Cross (R-Oswego). “This new law provides Illinois residents the ability to go to work, take their kids to school or the doctor. It will also make the roads safer for all residents. We must continue to work together to unite around common principles and ways to help keep families together.”

“We have been placed in this situation due to the inaction of the federal government,” said Senate Minority Leader Christine Radogno (R-Lemont). “We can be proud of our work together to step up and address the issue here in Illinois. It is the right time for this important public safety issue to move forward.”

“Individuals who are already driving to work, school and worship services will be able to do so without fear of unnecessary and costly incarceration,” Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said. “Requiring all drivers, regardless of their immigration status, to be trained, tested, licensed and insured will make our roads safer and ease the burden on Cook County courts and the jail. I commend Governor Quinn and leaders in the General Assembly for ushering through this common sense legislation.”

“Today we are setting a model for the country on bipartisan cooperation on immigration and I am proud to be a part of the signing of this bill that will allow every resident, regardless of legal status, to enjoy the rights and responsibilities that come with a driver’s license,” Mayor Rahm Emanuel said. “We have taken an important step to do what is right and sensible for immigrants in the state of Illinois. I commend the sponsors - Senate President John Cullerton, House Assistant Majority Leader Edward Acevedo – as well as the other Legislative Leaders for working together in a bipartisan fashion to get this done, and Secretary of State Jesse White for his leaderships ensuring all Illinois drivers, including undocumented drivers, get trained, licensed and insured.”

To ensure adequate time for responsible implementation, Senate Bill 957 goes into effect 10 months from today. For more information about the law and a list of lawmakers, faith, labor and community groups who support it, visit [www.HighwaySafetyCoalition.org](http://www.HighwaySafetyCoalition.org).

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