



**Testimony of Becky Straus, Legislative Director
In Support of SB 833
Senate Committee on Business and Transportation
April 10, 2013**

Chair Beyer and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of SB 833. It is an honor to join the many voices of support for this bill today and all from such diverse backgrounds. The demonstration of support today is a strong showing of the urgent need for this legislation in Oregon.

The ACLU has long-believed that we must de-link access to driver licenses from an applicant's citizenship or immigration status. Obtaining a driver license should be solely dependent upon road safety factors. SB 833 brings us closer to that goal and, because it advances important interests including road safety, public safety, and fundamental fairness, we urge your support.

Road Safety

Oregonians who drive to access medical care, take their children to school, or otherwise support their family and contribute to the vitality of our state need a driver license. Everyone on the road is safer when we subject everyone to a driver test and enable drivers to purchase liability insurance. According to a report released by the AAA Foundation in 2011, unlicensed drivers are five times more likely to be in a fatal car accident. Approximately 18.2% of all fatal crashes involved a driver who was either unlicensed or invalidly licensed, resulting in the deaths of 21,049 people.¹ Mandating that all residents of the state pass a driver test and know the rules of the road will lower the number of fatal car accidents.

And in those instances when drivers do get in accidents, or when medical emergencies occur even off the road, first responders and health care providers are much better suited to provide the best care when they can use a driver license to identify the individuals they are assisting.

Public Safety

A trusting relationship between all Oregonians, including immigrant communities, and law enforcement agencies is essential for witnesses and victims of crime to feel safe coming forward to report crime and too is a critical element in providing to prosecutors the information they need to combat crime. In this current and very challenging fiscal environment, denying licensure

¹ AAA Foundation for Traffic Study "Unlicensed to Kill," Nov. 2011.
<http://www.aaafoundation.org/multimedia/index.cfm?button=researchreports>.

unnecessarily clogs courts and diverts scarce law enforcement resources away from preventing serious crime.

Furthermore, at the scene of an accident, it is more difficult to determine what occurred and hold accountable the responsible parties when those involved may not have a license.

Fundamental Fairness

Members of the immigrant community in Oregon should not be required to choose between not driving and driving unlicensed with ever-present fear of entanglement in the criminal justice system. The broken federal immigration system should not stand in the way of Oregon pursuing common sense solutions that promote road safety and public safety.

SB 833 is a smart and fair proposal for the safety of all Oregonians. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.