

April 9, 2025

To: Montana Senate Judiciary Committee

From: Matthew C. Brower, Executive Director of the Montana Catholic Conference

Re: Testimony in support of HB 275

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Matt Brower. I serve as the Executive Director of the Montana Catholic Conference, and I am providing this testimony on behalf of the Roman Catholic bishops of Montana.

While issues related to immigration are sometimes divisive and often challenging to address, House Bill 275 provides a reasonable and common-sense policy approach to deal with a very real obstacle faced by some of our Montana residents who are immigrants.

There is a portion of our immigrant population in Montana who, while lawfully present, are at the same time unable to obtain a driver's license. This means that in addition to being unable to obtain auto insurance, they face significant challenges getting to work, attending school and participating in church services. By providing the opportunity to obtain a driving privilege card, we can help reduce the unnecessary barriers they face securing something as basic as daily transportation.

HB 275 is ultimately a bill that provides a reasonable solution to some practical problems. It promotes safety on our roads and can help certain lawfully present immigrants properly identify themselves to law enforcement should that need arise. More importantly, it allows them to more easily participate in society in fundamental and essential ways that are beneficial to them, their families and all of society.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, on behalf of the Montana Catholic Conference, I urge a "do concur."

Thank you.