



July 6, 2021

Senator Joe Boncore
Chair, Joint Committee on Transportation
State House, Room 112
Boston, MA, 02133

Representative William Straus
Chair, Joint Committee on Transportation
State House, Room 134
Boston, MA, 02133

RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of H.3456/S.2289, *An Act relative to work and family mobility during and subsequent to the COVID-19 emergency*

Dear Chairs Boncore and Straus,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of H.3456/S.2289, *An Act relative to work and family mobility during and subsequent to the COVID-19 emergency*, filed by Representatives Tricia Farley-Bouvier and Christine P. Barber and Senator Brenden Crighton. My name is Nahma Nadich and I am the Deputy Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of Greater Boston.

JCRC is a coalition of organizations and individuals that represent and advance the values, interests and priorities of the organized Jewish community throughout greater Boston. Our mission is to serve as a catalyst for building a strong and vibrant Jewish community in Boston and around the world, and to promote an American society which is democratic, pluralistic, and just. The Work and Family Mobility Act fits directly within the mission of our organization and our commitment to furthering social justice and equity for all those who reside in the Commonwealth.

Our support for H. 3456 and S. 2289 is informed by our community's deep resonance with the experience of immigration. Given that the Jewish community's success in this country is a direct result of accessing all the blessings that America has to offer, we are compelled to ensure the same opportunity for today's immigrants. We have spent the last four years mobilizing our community in response to the crisis facing immigrants, engaging hundreds of volunteers in court accompaniment, pastoral visits to detained immigrants, pro bono legal services, and the raising of funds. We know from first hand experience that many of these immigrants were detained when they were driving to work, or as they were driving their families.

In most areas, the ability to drive a car is essential to accessing medical services, food, and employment, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Families who cannot avoid driving risk family separation, arrest, and ICE detention. In Massachusetts, 54 percent of immigrants arrested and 57 percent of immigrants held in ICE custody either had no criminal conviction or had a minor traffic violation.

Routine stops and minor traffic violations are the entry-point to the deportation pipeline for unlicensed drivers. As many as 250,000 undocumented immigrants in our communities face these enormous hardships when completing everyday tasks necessary to provide for their families. Passing this bill would make these hard-working community members less vulnerable to detention and would protect their families from the trauma and disruption too many are currently facing.

By ensuring that all drivers are trained, licensed and insured, we can protect these families, many who are essential workers, taxpayers, and otherwise law-abiding residents. No person should be afraid that they will not see their families again if they get pulled over. We need Massachusetts to be a leader in equality and affirm to our residents that they are safe here in the Commonwealth.

For all these reasons, the JCRC supports this important legislation and asks that you favorably report S.2289 and H.3456 out of Committee. Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

Nahma Nadich
Deputy Director
JCRC of Greater Boston.