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Iowa Statewide Poll Finds Strong Support of Driver's Licenses for All Immigrants

Des Moines, Iowa — A poll by Public Policy Polling found that 58 percent of all Iowa caucus-goers support driver's licenses for immigrants, regardless of immigration status.

"It's encouraging to hear that the majority of Iowans support allowing all immigrants to access driver's licenses both from a humanitarian and safety perspective," said Erica Johnson, ACLU of Iowa advocacy director. "Immigrants, whether they have authorization or not, are here and are driving. That's because in a state like Iowa that is rural with harsh winters, they often have little option other than to drive in order to get to school, to buy food, or to get to doctors and churches. Making sure they are tested on the rules of the road and have insurance simply makes sense and helps everyone."

The ACLU of Iowa, a number of law enforcement officials, and advocacy groups have all been pushing for legislation that would authorize the Department of Transportation to allow all immigrants to apply for licenses.

To receive the proposed two-year Temporary Visitor Driver's License, the person would have to study for and pass the driver's test and get mandatory car insurance. The resulting license would be compliant with federal requirements, protected against fraud, and could be used only for driving — not as identification used to board an airplane, to receive government benefits, or to vote.

Eleven other states have approved similar driver's licenses.

The poll is timely because a bill that would provide for such licenses is now in play at the Iowa Legislature. House File 2318, introduced by Rep. John Kooiker (R-Boyden), provides for such licenses to be issued to immigrants regardless of authorization status.

The poll, commissioned by the ACLU of Iowa and conducted by a North Carolina professional polling company, was conducted on February 16 and 17. It surveyed 506 Iowa caucus goers: 48 percent attended their Democratic caucus, 52 percent attended the Republican caucus.

For more information on temporary driver's licenses in Iowa, go to <http://www.iowasaferoads.com/>

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The ACLU of Iowa is a private, non-partisan organization that fights to advance civil liberties for all. It is the state affiliate of the national American Civil Liberties Union. The ACLU prides itself in upholding everyone's civil liberties, no matter who they are or what they believe. We work to assure the rights of all Iowans — from atheists to devout Christians, from labor unions to businesspeople and more — to make sure the constitutional rights of all are preserved. For more information, please go to www.aclu-ia.org.

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