



# PRESS RELEASE

## OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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### **Equal Access to Roads Act Passes the Oregon House**

*Legislation ensures safer roads, that every driver is licensed and insured*

SALEM – The Equal Access to Roads Act passed the Oregon House of Representatives today, moving our state one step closer to ensuring that every Oregonian is able to get a driver’s license.

House Bill 2015 expands eligibility for a driver’s license to all Oregon residents, returning the state to a pre-2008 set of application requirements. At the same time, Oregon is required to implement stricter federal standards for issuing an enhanced driver’s license to bring the state into compliance with the federal Real ID Act.

“Because of the onerous requirements of the Real ID, many Oregonians, including the elderly, domestic violence survivors, victims of natural disasters, houseless individuals and immigrants don’t have access to the necessary identification,” said co-chief sponsor Rep. Diego Hernandez (D-Portland). “This legislation is about ensuring that our roads are safe and our neighbors can perform the everyday tasks that are vital to living their lives.”

Under the new standards, the state will offer two different types of driver’s licenses: the new, enhanced Real ID-compliant license, that can be used for air travel, access to federal buildings, among other things; and the standard license which will only be a license to drive. To get the enhanced license, Oregonians must submit additional identification documents and proof of citizenship. The standard license would be available to all Oregon residents who pass written and driving tests, pay necessary fees, and provide proof of identity and residency, regardless of citizenship status.

Rep. David Gomberg (D-Otis) spoke on the floor to the challenges for the many Oregonians, including himself, who were born outside the country and often do not have necessary documents.

Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon (D-Woodburn), who co-chief sponsored House Bill 2015 and co-carried the bill with Rep. Hernandez on the floor, spoke about the individuals from around Oregon who have shared their stories of fear and hardship around being able to access a driver’s license.

“Currently, for segments of our population, the lack of a driver’s license has impacted their everyday lives in ways that has created a lot of hardship, especially on things we take for granted,” Rep. Alonso Leon said. “Imagine the pain and frustration parents feel when they can’t do a simple task like grocery shopping or purchasing everyday needs for their kids like milk, baby formula, diapers or over the counter medication. While this has been challenging for many

parents, they have taken to walking for miles to get to work on shoulder-less dim roads to make sure they met their children's needs.”

Currently, 13 states have similar laws on the books. The legislation has the support of more than 100 business, labor, and community groups from across the state.

In addition to Rep. Hernandez and Rep. Alonso Leon, Sen. James Manning Jr. (D-Eugene), Rep. Susan McLain (D-Forest Grove), and Sen. Arnie Roblan (D-Coos Bay) signed on as sponsors. 37 House and Senate Democrats signed on as sponsors.

The legislation, which passed 39 to 21, now goes to the Oregon Senate for consideration.

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