

ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES *of* OREGON

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November 15, 2007

Governor Ted Kulongoski
160 State Capitol
900 Court Street
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Governor Kulongoski,

On behalf of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, I wish to express our strong concerns about proposed Executive Order 07-22 regarding standards for the issuance of Oregon driver licenses and identification cards.

We have only just become aware that you are considering this action and request that you not issue this Executive Order at this time in order to allow for further discussion and revision. While we recognize there may be a need to tighten security regarding the issuance of driver licenses, we believe there should be more widespread public discussion about the best method to achieve this.

We are especially concerned that the order has the potential to negatively impact both citizens and non-citizens of Oregon, since some Oregonians simply do not have Social Security numbers or other documents required to get a drivers license under this order.

Additionally, while increasing the security of driver licenses is an important consideration, we believe this executive order could result in hundreds or even thousands of Oregon drivers becoming ineligible for a drivers license or for auto insurance. This does not improve the safety of our state.

This is especially true because it is the process of applying for and receiving a driver license that insures that individual drivers understand the rules of the road, have adequate eyesight, and know how to operate a motor vehicle. If an entire class of Oregon residents suddenly loses the option of obtaining a license, the inevitable result is many more people operating vehicles who have not taken the time to study the driver's manual and learn to operate a vehicle well-enough to pass a DMV administered driving test. Licensed drivers take classes and pass tests. They are also registered, photographed, and insured.

Another concern is the potential costs to implement this order, and the changes required for the DMV to fully implement its requirements.

We also believe driver licenses should be available to all capable residents of Oregon regardless of immigration status. We are indeed blessed to live in a nation of great liberty and great prosperity. Many of the immigrants who have relocated to Oregon have come at great

personal sacrifice due to situations of severe economic hardship and are in search of opportunity. Some have fled oppression or violence. Most seek honest work and make important contributions to our state's economy. As people of faith, we also believe we should remember the wise counsel found in Leviticus 19: 33-34 regarding the treatment of immigrants, "The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were once strangers in the land of Egypt."

Let us take the time necessary to craft a solution that improves driver license security without denying licenses to any capable drivers in Oregon, and taking into account the potential burden's placed on Oregon's residents.

We deeply appreciate your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

David Leslie
Executive Director

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association of Christian denominations, congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians through community ministry programs, ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, environmental ministry and public policy advocacy.

Please note: The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland releases all public policy statements through the Oregon Catholic Conference.