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Catholic Conference of Illinois applauds Senate passage of SB 957, urges House approval of temporary licenses for immigrants

CHICAGO – The organization representing Illinois’ Catholic bishops today applauded Senate approval of Senate Bill 957, which expands existing Temporary Visitor Driver’s Licenses (TVDL) to undocumented immigrants.

Catholic Conference of Illinois Executive Director Robert Gilligan noted many immigrant parents are separated from their children when stopped for a minor traffic violation. Unable to produce a license, they are then deported.

“Too many of our immigrant families have been torn apart by the simple act of driving,” Gilligan said. “What hurts one family hurts our entire community, for the family is the building block of society.”

TVDLs are currently issued to individuals who have lawful immigration status but no Social Security Number. They can be used only for driving – not for identification – and must be renewed after three years.

Immigrants would be required to pay a fee, and pass vision, written and road tests to get a TVDL. They also would need to provide proof of Illinois residency of at least one year, and buy auto insurance.

Approximately 250,000 undocumented, unlicensed drivers live in Illinois.

“All families are safer when every driver is trained, tested, licensed and insured,” Gilligan said.

The Senate passed SB 957 on a 41-14-1 vote. The measure now moves to the House for consideration.

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The Catholic Conference of Illinois was created in 1969 to serve as the public policy voice of the Illinois bishops and the six dioceses of the state: Belleville, Chicago, Joliet, Peoria, Rockford and Springfield-in-Illinois.