



Making Idaho's Roads Safer

Idaho's roads and highways are the lifeline for working families throughout the state. Eighty-seven percent of Idaho's workers rely on a vehicle to get to work and they drive an average of 17 miles to get there. The majority of the vehicle miles traveled in Idaho occur on its state highway and interstate systems. For the safety of all, it is critical that Idaho's drivers are well trained and most importantly, legally licensed to drive.

Although Idaho does not require a driver's license applicant to have a social security number, any applicant without a social security number must fulfill three other legal residence requirements. For the close to 21,000 undocumented aliens who work in Idaho and pay taxes, but who are not eligible for a social security card and cannot show that they are lawfully present, obtaining a drivers license is nearly impossible. Many of these people work on Idaho's farms and keep Idaho's agricultural economy alive with the labor. However, they are ineligible for a driver's license, despite the fact that they need to and *do* drive for work and other purposes.

FACT:

Unlicensed drivers are:

4.9 times more likely to be involved in fatal crashes than valid license holders

5.3 times more likely to be involved in hit and run accidents.

There is a practical and safe alternative

In 1996, the Internal Revenue Services (IRS), began issuing "Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) to people who were required to file tax returns, but were not eligible for a Social Security Number (SSN). The ITIN is a 9-digit number, beginning with the number 9, formatted like a SSN. Only those who are not eligible for SSN, are eligible for the ITIN. The ITIN is not a SSN. It does not entitle a person to Social Security benefits, the Earned Income Tax Credit, to legally work in the United States or any of Idaho's means-tested public program. It was designed only for tax purposes. The ITIN allows individuals to file taxes, receive tax returns and be tracked in federal and state systems.

Many states, including Illinois, Tennessee, North Carolina, Utah, and Washington accept the ITIN or other forms of identification in place of the SSN for the purpose of providing identification for a driver's license.

The benefits of using ITINs include

- √ Allowing drivers to take Idaho's vision, knowledge, and driving skill tests, making them safer drivers.
- √ Reduced number of hit and runs and fatal car crashes in Idaho.
- √ Those who successfully obtain a drivers license will be able to lawfully drive and obtain car insurance. This will ensure that all drivers share the financial risks of driving.
- √ More licensed drivers will help police do their job and obtain information about the driver such as possible outstanding arrest warrants or a history of traffic violations.

Idaho's legislature should make the switch to ITINs to allow undocumented workers eligible for drivers licenses. By passing a bill to allow those who are not eligible for a Social Security Number to submit an Individual Tax Identification Number instead (ITIN), the legislature will be making Idaho's roads safer for all.

For more information:

Idaho Community Action Network (ICAN)

1311 W. Jefferson

Boise, ID 83702

(208) 385-9146