

Undocumented Immigrants Now Can Get Driver's Licenses In Virginia; Mimics Maryland In 2013

Posted by [Zach Hill](#) On 07/21/2020

Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam at the virtual signing ceremony. (PHOTO: Gov. Ralph Northam)

RICHMOND, Va. — Virginia Governor Ralph Northam enacted [a law](#) allowing for the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue “driver privilege cards” to undocumented immigrants living in Virginia if they meet certain criteria starting on January 1, 2021, mimicking a decision that Maryland’s General Assembly made back in 2013.

The bill, [which passed roughly along party lines but not entirely in the Democratic-held Virginia legislature](#), will apply regardless of legal status to anyone who “has reported income from Virginia sources or been claimed as a dependent on an individual tax return filed with the Commonwealth in the preceding 12 months and is not in violation of the insurance requirements for the registration of an uninsured motor vehicle.”

Northam signed the law via an online teleconference call which included members of the legislature who introduced the bill in both chambers, Del. Kathy Tran(D) and Sen. Scott Surovell(D). Virginia is now the 17th state to pass such a bill.

We are excited to see [@GovernorVA](#) sign the Driver's Privilege Card LAW to allow immigrant families the ability to drive.

Thank you to immigrant advocates & legislators working to [#DriveVAForward](#) for years.

Virginia is the 17th state to give the right to drive to immigrants ■ [pic.twitter.com/pcb03dt3G0](#)

— VA Coalition for Immigrant Rights (@VA_Immigrants) [July 20, 2020](#)

In Maryland, the first state on the East Coast to grant undocumented immigrants the privilege to drive without providing proof of “legal presence,” [the Washington Post reported](#) back in Feb. that 275,000 licenses have been issued since the Old Line State passed the law back in 2013. The bill was introduced in Maryland by former state senator Victor Ramirez(D-Prince George's).

The bill which was enacted in Virginia explicitly states that the driving privilege card does not “confer voting privileges, permit an individual to waive any part of the driver examination, or have their issuance be contingent upon the applicant’s ability to produce proof of legal presence in the United States.”

The bill, which had its original signing delayed by the coronavirus, will go into effect in Virginia on January 1, 2021.

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