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Ismail Mohamed

State Representative, Ohio House District 3

Chair Ghanbari, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Homeland Security Committee, thank you for allowing Representative Dobos and I to give sponsor testimony before you today. My joint sponsor and I are here today to discuss a commonsense piece of legislation that would provide clarity and peace of mind to people visiting Ohio from outside of the United States.

Ohio is a state that prides itself on its hospitality and welcomes millions of visitors each year. Out of state tourism contributes significantly to our economy, supporting local businesses and attractions across the state. However, despite Ohio's longstanding recognition of foreign driver's licenses under the 1949 United Nations International Convention on Road Traffic, there remains confusion and inconsistency in how these licenses are treated.

While Ohio has technically recognized foreign licenses since the adoption of the 1949 convention, many individuals, including some law enforcement officers, are unaware of this provision. This lack of awareness can lead to unnecessary complications and even citations for nonresident drivers who are simply exercising their right to drive in Ohio with a valid international license.

This legislation aims to address these issues by codifying the recognition of certain nonresident drivers with valid international licenses, providing clarity and assurance to both nonresident drivers and law enforcement officers. By doing so, we can eliminate confusion regarding the validity and duration of foreign licenses, ensuring that all parties involved understand their rights and responsibilities under the law.

Furthermore, by formalizing Ohio's recognition of international licenses, we send a message of welcome and hospitality to visitors from around the world. This not only enhances our reputation as a tourist destination but also strengthens our economy by encouraging continued visitation and spending in our state.

It is important to note that this legislation does not create any new rights for nonresident drivers but simply clarifies and codifies existing law. It aligns Ohio's practices with those of over 100 other countries that are signatories to the 1949 convention, providing consistency and reciprocity in our treatment of foreign drivers.

Thank you for considering my testimony, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ismail Mohamed", written over a horizontal line.

Ismail Mohamed

State Representative, Ohio House District 3