



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1196
401-222-2080

Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

June 29, 2016

TO THE HONORABLE, THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

In accordance with the provisions of article IX, section 14 of the Constitution of the State of Rhode Island and section 43-1-4 of the Rhode Island General Laws, I transmit, with my disapproval, 2016 H 7534A/2, as Amended, “An Act Relating to Motor and Other Vehicles – Reciprocity Agreements – Foreign Driver Licenses.”

Under current law, a foreign national with a valid operator’s license from his or her home country may operate a motor vehicle in this state. This bill would create an additional requirement for foreign nationals with an active work visa, study visa or green card. They would have to complete an application provided by the Rhode Island Division of Motor Vehicles and obtain a certification from their country’s consulate or embassy attesting to the validity of their operator’s license. The bill also provides a system for reciprocal recognition of operator licenses between Rhode Island and other countries.

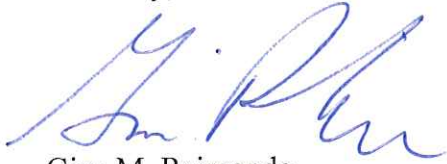
The United States is a signatory to the 1949 Geneva Convention on Road Traffic, an international treaty that establishes certain uniform rules governing use of the roads in signatory countries. Chapter V, article 24 (1) of the Convention permits any driver over 18 holding a valid license issued by a signatory to the Convention to drive in another signatory country “without further examination.” International treaties must be liberally construed to effectuate their purpose. The additional application and certification requirements of this bill are at odds with the Convention’s purpose of simplifying and unifying driving regulations on an international level. As such, these restrictions limit rights granted by the Convention and thereby violate the Supremacy Clause of the United States Constitution.

Despite the constitutional infirmities with the bill’s application and certification requirements, I fully support reciprocal recognition of foreign drivers’ licenses. Such reciprocal recognition is good for economic development and I applaud Representative Kennedy for his leadership on this issue. I look forward to working with the sponsors of the House and Senate versions of this bill to craft a constitutional bill authorizing a reciprocal recognition system for introduction in the next session.

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For these reasons, I disapprove of this legislation and respectfully urge your support of this veto.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gina M. Raimondo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and "M".

Gina M. Raimondo
Governor