

## 7 Drivers' Licenses

Many states do not allow undocumented people to get drivers' licenses. Currently, undocumented people can get drivers licenses in 7 states -Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, New Mexico, Utah, and Washington.

The Real ID Act, which Congress passed in 2005 without much debate, prohibits states from issuing drivers licenses to undocumented immigrants. It will force states to make every applicant provide extensive documentation of their identity and status; put everyone's private information in a national database; spend billions on the new requirements. A number of states have enacted laws that call on Congress to repeal or amend Real ID. (For more information go to: [www.nilc.org](http://www.nilc.org))

Stories from In Our Own Voices: The hardest thing for me is not being able to get a driver's license. If you drive without one you are always scared you will be stopped by the police. But I have to go to the store to buy milk for my little son, or drive my kids to school.

**Esmerelda, 21, Idaho**

## 8. Health Care and language access

Federal civil rights law requires health care providers that receive federal funds (including Medicaid and Medicare) to provide their patients with interpretation and translation services if they need it. For a doctor, being able to communicate with a patient is one of the most basic steps in providing competent care. Despite these legal and ethical requirements, immigrants are often expected to provide their own interpreter, or go without. That means that parents end up relying on their children to translate, have a stranger like the hospital's janitor interpret, or just go without being able to communicate with their doctor.

Stories from In Our Own Voices: Last year, I went to the ER because I had a pain in my stomach. I had to use a telephone interpreter because they didn't have anyone to interpret in person. The hospital kept sending me bills and I pay what I can. Collections called me eight months ago, and the person who called spoke Spanish. They couldn't provide an interpreter for my health care, but they could find someone to call and threaten me in Spanish. **Natividad, Idaho**

## 9 Comprehensive immigration reform

Groups that are fighting for comprehensive immigration reform have agreed to fight for four principles, each equally important to fixing our broken system:

- Provide a Path to Permanent Resident Status and Citizenship for All Members of Our Communities
- Reunite Families and Reduce Backlogs
- Provide Opportunities for Safe Future Migration and Maintaining Worker Protections
- Restore Due Process to Immigrants

## 10 ICE Raids

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) conducts raids at workplaces, homes, and other places. ICE raids have taken place in many communities in many states. When ICE goes to homes, they say that they are looking for specific people who have arrest warrants, but they pick up thousands of other people who happen to be nearby when they sweep through apartment complexes and homes. Raids tear apart families, terrorize children, and devastate communities.

## 11 Being unable to visit family in other countries

I haven't seen my parents in 12 years. It's really hard as a girl because you need your mom. But after a while you get used to it because there's no other way. You just have to call them, but it's hard because you don't really know them. You don't know what they do, what they like and don't like. You can't get much information over the phone. My brothers are like my parents now. I'd like to visit my parents but it's too hard to come back, and we can't get a visa for my mother to come here.

**Cristina, 17, Washington**

## 12 Citizenship Exam

Another barrier on the path to citizenship is the citizenship test, or naturalization exam. With some exceptions for seniors and people with disabilities, an applicant has to show that they can read, write, and speak English. They also have to pass a test about the history and government of the United States. The test has been recently redesigned and made even harder. It includes questions like "What is the rule of law?" and "Who was President during World War I?" that would be difficult for someone born and raised in the US to answer. Applicants will have to take the new test starting in October 2008.