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**TESTIMONY ON 18-H 7982,
RELATING TO DACA RECIPIENTS**
April 3, 2018

The ACLU of Rhode Island supports the important benefit that this bill would give DACA recipients in our state: the ability to continue to drive. At the same time, we would like to work with the bill sponsor and the committee to propose some tweaks to the language of the bill in order to make certain it accomplishes its critical goal.

Over 1,200 DACA recipients live in Rhode Island and are directly affected by the President's repeal last year of the order establishing the DACA program and the consequent limbo into which these young people have been placed as court challenges to the repeal proceed. As recently as this week, the President has made clear he has no intention of helping these individuals retain their status. As a result, Congress cannot be expected to provide any help to the Dreamers either. The current situation has only exacerbated the day-to-day fear and dread that already exist among the immigrant community.

In qualifying for the DACA program, these Rhode Island residents earned the right to drive, but when their status expires, so will this right, further upending their lives. In the absence of Congressional action, state officials have an essential role to play to protect those who have been victimized by this inhumane action. That is why legislation ensuring that Dreamers will still be able to drive is so important.

As noted above, we believe the proposed language in this bill needs some clarification, and we look forward to working with the sponsor in addressing that. In the meantime, we have been heartened in recent months by so many political leaders' comments in Rhode Island in support of the Dreamers. We hope that the General Assembly will translate that support into concrete action by supporting a version of this significant legislation.