

SENATE DEMOCRATIC LEADER • MARK SCHAUER • 19TH DISTRICT

Schauer Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Feb 14, 2008

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Schauer, Senate Dems Support Bills to Keep Borders Safe, Encourage Economic Development

Legislation prevents illegal immigrants from acquiring driver's license, protects legal residents

LANSING-State Sen. Mark Schauer (D-Battle Creek) and his colleagues today voted to keep illegal immigrants from obtaining a Michigan driver's license. The same legislation protects foreign residents who are here legally, like business executives and students, by ensuring they have access to a driver's license.

"We live in a global economy," said Schauer. "That means protecting both our safety interests and our economic interests. This bill does both, which is especially important in a border state like Michigan."

Thousands of Michigan jobs were recently threatened by a Secretary of State interpretation of a ruling by Attorney General Mike Cox that prohibited legal foreign residents from obtaining driver's licenses. Executives, students, and professors stationed in Michigan were immediately ineligible to get or renew a driver's license. Companies were beginning to seek alternative locations for their American operations.

"Senator Schauer's work to make this fix happen was crucial to our ability to keep hundreds of jobs in Michigan," said Jan Burland, Director of Corporate Projects for Battle Creek Unlimited and Board Chair of the Japan-America Society of West Michigan. "Many legal foreign citizens affected by this contribute a great deal to our local economies. This fix will help Michigan compete for jobs in the global marketplace."

Visiting executives often spend months at a time in our state and establish a residence in Michigan, and being able to drive is a necessary part of day to day life. However, this bill also ensures that illegal immigrants cannot get a Michigan driver's license.

"One of our state's biggest strengths is our mix of research institutions and jobs in the technology sector, both of which have an international presence." Schauer said. "This bill made sure that we can continue to encourage investment and grow jobs in Michigan and while ensuring that illegal immigrants cannot obtain identification that would help them to participate in terrorist activities."

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Mark Schauer is the Senate Democratic Floor Leader. He represents the 19th Senate District, which includes all of Calhoun County and most of Jackson County.

