

SUBJECT: A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY REQUESTING THE STATE OF ALASKA TO REVIEW DMV PROCESSES AND CONSIDER MODIFICATIONS TO FACILITATE REFUGEES' ABILITY TO RENEW DRIVER'S LICENSES.

AGENDA OF: April 7, 2026

Assembly Action: Adopted without objection 04/07/26 - BJH

AGENDA ACTION REQUESTED: Present to the Assembly for consideration.

Route To	Signatures
Originator	3 / 2 0 / 2 0 2 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Estelle Wiese <small>Signed by: Estelle Wiese</small>
Borough Attorney	3 / 2 0 / 2 0 2 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shannon Bodolay for NS <small>Signed by: Shannon Bodolay</small>
Borough Manager	3 / 2 0 / 2 0 2 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michael Brown <small>Signed by: Mike Brown</small>
Borough Clerk	3 / 2 5 / 2 0 2 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brenda J. Henry for <small>Signed by: Brenda Henry</small>

ATTACHMENT (S) : Fiscal Note: YES _____ NO X
 Resolution Serial No. 26-027 (3 pp)
 Letter from New Chance Inc. Ukraine Relief Program

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

This legislation is coming forward at the request of Assemblymember Fonov supporting Ukrainian refugees and their ability to drive legally in the State of Alaska.

This legislation is an attempt to help those Ukrainian Humanitarian Parole (UHP) and Temporary Status (TPS) holders in the Matanuska Borough. However, if the State makes the recommended changes, it would affect refugees and asylees all over the State of Alaska. In addition, a growing number of Ukrainian families who initially obtained Temporary Protected Status have now filed for asylum, placing them into pending asylum status. While this category reflects lawful presence under federal law, it does not produce a federal document with a defined expiration date. As a result, these individuals fall into the same document-verification gap at the DMV

as those awaiting TPS renewals, despite full compliance with all federal filing deadlines.

There are many Ukrainian families who arrived in Alaska lawfully and are believed to have timely filed their parole renewals, TPS applications, and employment authorizations renewals. However, many have experienced delays in these being processed - sometimes up to or over a year. The long time for such is believed to be due to the federal agency backlogs.

The current state law of Alaska Statute 28.15 constrains the Department of Motor Vehicle's (DMV) ability to issue driver's licenses. The duration of any driver's license is governed by AS 28.15.101. Under that statute, the Department may issue either an eight-year license to individuals with permanent lawful status or a limited-term license that must expire on the same date as the applicant's authorized period of stay. The Department will not issue a license absent a valid federal document that includes a defined expiration date.

If the Federal government takes a long time to renew the documents required for the Department to determine lawful status and the authorized period of stay, they can be denied their ability to drive and support their family. This result is not consistent with helping refugees and asylees.

There are a number of other states that allow individuals to receive permission to drive if they cannot establish lawful status or lawful presence if they meet certain requirements. This resolution includes a narrowly tailored approach for the particular circumstance at issue here.

This resolution requests the State modify its processes by changing State law so that the Department of Motor Vehicles can renew a driver's license for individuals who have applied for extension, renewal, or continuation of lawful status but has not received a determination yet, and provides language to effectuate that change to AS 28.15.101.

RECOMMENDATION OF ADMINISTRATION:

The Administration recommends that the Assembly adopt the accompanying resolution.