

By: Assemblymember Fonov
Action:

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
RESOLUTION SERIAL NO. 26-027**

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.

WHEREAS, the United States has provided humanitarian relief to Ukrainians and Russians fleeing the war in Ukraine through the use of the humanitarian and Protected status programs;

WHEREAS, many Ukrainian refugees and/or asylees that are in the State are here under Ukrainian Humanitarian Parole (UHP) and have Temporary Protected Status (TPS);

WHEREAS, many individuals who initially held Temporary Protected Status have subsequently filed timely asylum applications, and these filings place them into lawful "pending asylum" status; however, because pending asylum does not provide a federal document with a defined expiration date, the Department of Motor Vehicles is unable to verify an authorized period of stay for these individuals, preventing renewal of otherwise valid Alaska driver's licenses;

WHEREAS, federal processing delays have impeded the timely issuance of updated documents the State of Alaska Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) accepts for the determination of lawful status, and length of authorized stay, thereby hindering refugees'

ability to renew their Alaska driver's licenses;

WHEREAS, ON April 15, 2025 the Borough Assembly unanimously passed resolution Serial No. 25-046 which called on elected officials, advocacy organizations, and community leaders to garner support for legislative solutions that will protect Ukrainians that are part of these programs from displacement and ensure long-term stability;

WHEREAS, being able to drive legally, or have family members able to drive legally in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough is very important to individuals long term stability, as most areas of the Borough are not served by regular scheduled mass transportation;

WHEREAS, a lack of an ability to lawfully drive can impact a refugee's or their family's safety, and is related to whether or not their family is able to attend school in person, attend church or participate and serve in their community;

WHEREAS, the Borough requests the State of Alaska amend the State laws, and specifically the DMV process, to allow refugee and asylees to obtain driver's privileges more rapidly;

NOW, THEREFORE, BEIT RESOLVED, the Borough requests the Legislature consider adopting the following statutory language to effectuate such amendment to AS 28.15.101:

(e) Notwithstanding (d) of this section, under regulations adopted by the department, the department may renew a standard (non-federally compliant) driver's license issued under (d) of this section for a period

not to exceed two years for a person who:

(1) previously held a valid Alaska driver's license or identification card issued under (d) of this section;

(2) has timely applied to the federal government for an extension, renewal, or continuation of lawful status;

(3) has not received a final determination on the application described in (2) of this subsection at the time of renewal due to federal processing delays;

(4) submits an affidavit, under penalty of perjury, attesting that the application described in (2) of this subsection has been filed and remains pending;

(5) is verified through the federal Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program as having no adverse or terminating status at the time of renewal. An inconclusive SAVE response shall not be grounds for denial; and

(6) has not been convicted of a felony in this state.

(f) A driver's license issued under subsection (e) of this section does not confer lawful status and shall be subject to cancellation if the department later determines that the person is no longer authorized to stay in the United States.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly this - day
of -, 2026.

EDNA DeVRIES, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

(SEAL)