I’m using my space in this edition to offer a bit of a follow up to my last column, which centered on legislative priorities from my Democratic colleagues—in particular, their focus on undocumented immigrants.

The latest proposal to make headlines comes from Gov. Lamont, who wants the special drive-only licenses the state provides to people who are in our country illegally to be virtually indistinguishable from the driver’s licenses issued to Connecticut citizens. The proposal will soon be debated in the Transportation Committee, which is responsible for topics tied to the state’s Department of Motor Vehicles.

The gist is that Gov. Lamont’s proposal is a response to action taken last May by Gov. Ron DeSantis in Florida, which doesn’t honor the out-of-state drive-only licenses issued by states such as Connecticut. Our governor wants to limit the possibility of a “vulnerable” drive-only license holder from Connecticut ending up with immigration problems if he or she happens to be driving in a “hostile” state such as Florida and is pulled over by police.

The Governor’s proposal would remove language from these drive-only licenses that indicates it cannot be used for voting purposes. That point, in particular, concerns me.

As you might expect, the Governor tells us that “multiple” controls exist within our DMV and Secretary of the State systems to prevent noncitizens who apply for the drive-only licenses from being automatically registered to vote through our state’s motor voter program. I’m not as confident. It wasn’t that long ago residents, attempting to vote in a primary, feared their party affiliations were being changed, via motor voter, without their knowledge.

Electronic systems aside, I fear the implications for management of local elections. I expect confusion when noncitizens, carrying indistinguishable licenses, try to vote. It’s fair to say that more policing of the Election Day Registration process will be required.

The Governor’s prioritization of this proposal is disappointing, particularly when juxtaposed with many other critical issues that demand attention, such as juvenile crime, absentee ballot fraud, or problems in group homes for at-risk kids.

This proposal (H.B. 5057) demands more scrutiny, and I look forward to members of the Transportation Committee drawing out details during upcoming meetings.

**Rep. Vincent Candelora**

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