

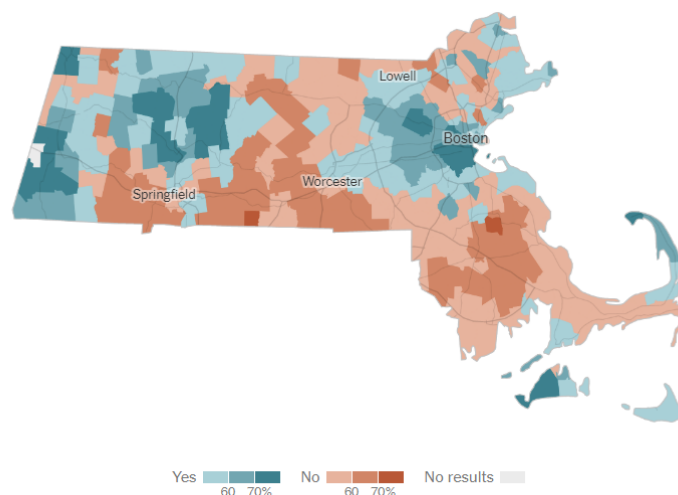
Question 4: Results, Reactions, and the Future

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On June 9, 2022, the Massachusetts legislature passed the [Work and Family Mobility Act](#), which provides any Massachusetts resident, regardless of citizenship status, the ability to obtain a standard driver's license. Though Governor Charlie Baker initially [vetoed](#) the bill, the Massachusetts senate overrode it with a vote of [32-8](#). Only a few days after the bill was approved, a push for [repeal](#) began. Fair and Secure Massachusetts, a committee dedicated to repealing the Work and Family Mobility Act, received [71,883 signatures](#) on their petition, exceeding the 40,120 certification requirement. Thus, the Work and Family Mobility Act was pushed to referendum, appearing on the November 2022 Ballot as [Question 4](#).

Results



Results of Question 4 election in Massachusetts by town. Source: [The New York Times](#)

[53.7%](#) of Massachusetts residents voted “Yes” in favor of the Work and Family Mobility Act, which will go into effect July 1st, 2023. Though this seems to be a narrow majority, many counties saw a more decisive vote. “Yes” votes held a significant majority in Cambridge, Somerville, Brookline, Northampton, Amherst, and Provincetown. “No” votes prevailed by much smaller margins in East Bridgewater, Wales, Montgomery, Monroe, Rochester, Southwick. Consequently, the “Yes” counties overrode the “No” counties, pushing the act into place.

Reactions

Massachusetts organizations had mixed reactions to the Q4 vote. As the numbers leaned in favor of passing the Work and Family Mobility Act, Nicole Caravella, spokesperson for Yes on Q4, [expressed](#) that they were confident in the positive results of their campaign efforts.

Shortly after the results came out, organizations such as [Fair & Secure Massachusetts](#) expressed their disapproval. Henry Barbaro, a climate scientist volunteering with Fair and Secure MA, [voiced](#) concern that the law would incentivize illegal immigration and allow those without legal documentation to establish and exploit an “American” identity to expedite the immigration process.

A recent Facebook post by Fair and Secure MA [criticized](#) the [FORWARD economic development bill](#)'s 9.2 million dollar request for the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) to implement the Work and Family Mobility Act. This budget allegedly [ensures](#) that the RMV meets staffing and procedure requirements for new services, but Fair and Secure MA questions how much the RMV needs to increase its annual budget to handle the new law. Governor Charles Baker [admits](#) finding it difficult to predict the next 6 to 18 months, but is confident that the budget requested in the bill will be enough to address the arrivals of new families in need of assistance.

Under the Q4 Law

To learn more about new state regulations under the Work and Family Mobility Act, we contacted Debra O’Malley, Director of Communications at the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth. According to O’Malley, the Registrar of Motor Vehicles publishes regulations after consulting the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth. A specific date for the regulations’ release has not yet been determined, but the regulations will be established before the act goes into effect in July 2023

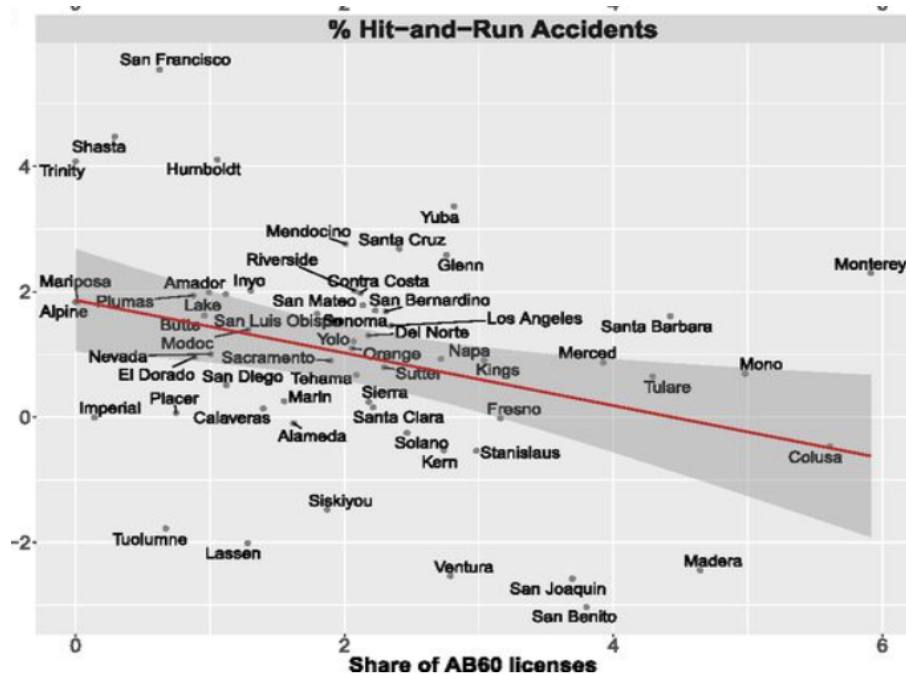
Amidst illegal immigration concerns, O’Malley described how the current Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) system works. The RMV screens registrants for citizenship documentation before submitting them to the Secretary of State for voter registration purposes. O’Malley pushed back against illegal immigration claims, asserting that , “a citizen is only automatically registered to vote if they have submitted to the RMV a U.S. Passport, U.S. birth certificate, or U.S. naturalization papers.” This process ensures that any non-citizen or citizen who does not

demonstrate evidence of citizenship to the RMV will not have their name and address sent to the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth for voter registration.

Trends and Predictions

As of now, [sixteen other states](#) have laws that would allow undocumented immigrants to obtain a driver's license. These states reported general [decreases](#) in the frequency of hit-and-run accidents. The impact of laws like Q4 on other states foreshadow its outcome on Massachusetts road safety and influence the opinion of Massachusetts residents on giving undocumented immigrants driver licenses and other recognitions. Depending on Q4's outcome, political parties supporting or opposing the law may find themselves thrust into the limelight again.

In California, the Work and Family Mobility Act correlated to [10 percent fewer hit-and-run crashes](#) each year after it was passed.

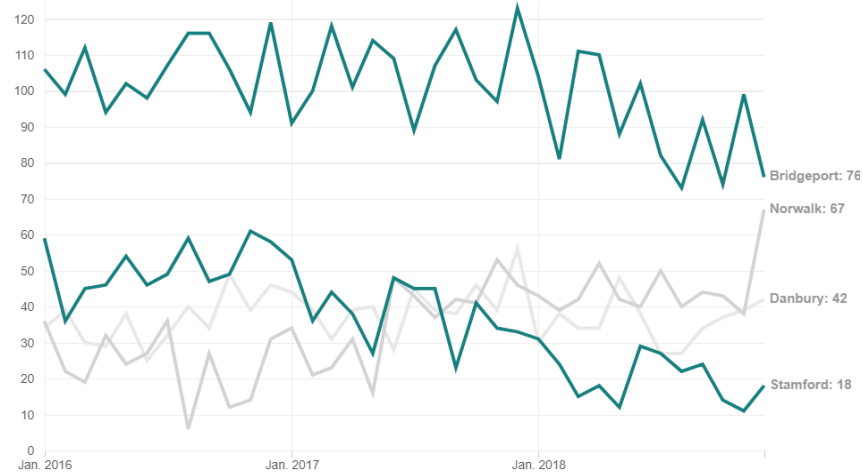


Graph shows a horizontal increase in licenses provided to undocumented immigrants and a vertical decrease in hit-and-run rates. Source: [Leuders et. al](#)

Similarly, the act correlated to a decrease of [15% hit-and-run](#) crashes cross ten Connecticut cities with the greatest density of [Drive-Only](#) licenses provided to undocumented immigrants. These licenses are not valid for federal identification and cannot be used to vote. Massachusetts has not yet revealed whether the RMV will be offering drive-only licenses or modify the appearance of the standard license for new applicants.

In Some Towns, Hit-And-Runs Declined After Connecticut License Law Went Into Effect

Of the four towns that issued the most Drive Only licenses since 2015, two saw decreases in hit-and-run accidents.



The graph shows a decrease in hit and run rates in some towns in Connecticut over a two year period. Statewide in Connecticut, hit and run rates have decreased 9% between 2016 and 2018.

Source: [Connecticut Crash Data Repository](#), Department of Motor Vehicles; Credit: Sean McMinn/NPR

Both states saw a downward trend in hit-and-run accidents. California, Massachusetts, and Connecticut are similar in their population of immigrants. Compared to making up [13.7%](#) of the U.S. population, immigrants make Q4 supporters hope that the Work and Family Mobility Act will make Massachusetts safer, but its effects are not set in stone. It will take years for researchers to come to credible conclusions about the act's impact on road safety.

As more Massachusetts residents apply for driver's licenses, driver's licenses will identify undocumented immigrants that had not been counted in the census, painting a clearer picture of Massachusetts' vast immigrant population. These individuals will also be required to contribute towards automobile insurance tax for the state, supporting state infrastructure and [upholding](#) the budget for the Registrar of Motor Vehicles.

The RMV will perform under watchful eyes for the next few years as residents use the effectiveness of the Work and Family Mobility Act to evaluate their newly elected state leaders. With time, we can analyze Q4's long-term impact to continue to make informed voting decisions. The next time you vote, remember that your voice counts.