



STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

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Testimony of the Department of Motor Vehicles
Transportation Committee Public Hearing
February 9, 2009

Proposed S.B. No. 436
**AN ACT PROHIBITING THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT FROM
COMPLYING WITH THE FEDERAL REAL ID ACT OF 2005**

Proposed S.B. No. 438
**AN ACT AN ACT REQUIRING PROOF OF UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP OR
OTHER LEGAL RESIDENCY IN THE UNITED STATES IN ORDER TO OBTAIN OR
RENEW A MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENSE**

Proposed S.B. No. 560
AN ACT TO PROHIBIT ILLEGAL ALIENS FROM HAVING A DRIVER'S LICENSE

The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) appreciates this opportunity to discuss the federal mandate known as the Real ID Act, as well as the various proposals concerning driver's license requirements that are currently before this Committee.

Passed by Congress in May 2005, the Real ID Act is a federal effort aimed at improving the integrity and security of driver's licenses and identification cards by requiring certain minimum, uniform standards be met prior to credential issuance. These standards primarily prescribe information and security features for the physical license document, as well as procedures for the verification of an applicant's identity, paperwork and legal presence in this country. Although the law was effective May 11, 2008, the Federal Department of Homeland Security recognized that more time was needed for compliance and all states were given an extension to December 31, 2009. Residents of states that fail to comply with the Act's requirements will not be permitted to present their license or ID card for official purposes, including accessing a federal building, boarding commercial aircraft and entering nuclear power plants.

Over the last several years, even before the Real ID mandate was enacted, DMV has worked systematically to enhance our credential issuance processes. Coincidentally, many of the Department's programmatic, regulatory and legislative changes have overlapped with Real ID requirements. For example, in 2007 legislation was passed to require anyone offered employment with the Department to be fingerprinted and submit to state and national criminal history record checks (§14-9a); and DMV last year updated its Regulations on *Issuing a Motor Vehicle Operator's License*, which serve to define the identification requirements for all applicants. The Regulations

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also define the standards for issuing licenses to persons who are not citizens or permanent residents.

While the future of the federal Real ID Act may be somewhat fluid, DMV hopes members of this Committee will review and consider any proposals that will provide a cost-effective opportunity to improve the integrity of Connecticut-issued driver's licenses and identification cards. One such measure that the agency has supported for several years would grant the Department authority to tie the expiration of a driver's license to the expiration of a person's legal stay in this country.

Connecticut driver's licenses are issued for a six-year term, with exceptions for individuals age 65 or older who may renew for a two-year term and CDL holders who are issued licenses for a four-year term. By making this commonsense change, which many other states have already enacted, the Department would, in fact, be allowed to issue licenses in certain cases where applications are now denied. These limited term licenses would clearly indicate the expiration date, though there is always the option to renew if evidence is presented that shows the holder's authorized stay has been extended. Even evidence of a *pending* application before the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services would be sufficient for these purposes.

The Department of Motor Vehicles and its staff look forward to working with members of the Transportation Committee on this important issue, and are available to answer any questions you may have.