

United States Senate

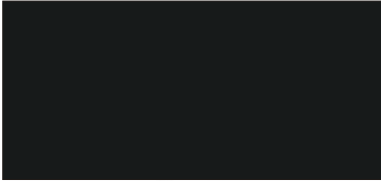
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Committees:
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Appropriations
Governmental Affairs
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Thanks for contacting me about implementing the Real ID Act.

During the 109th Congress, H.R. 1268, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Bill for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Tsunami Relief Act, was passed by Congress and signed into law on May 11, 2005. I voted in support of H.R. 1268. Contained in this bill is language that prohibits Federal agencies from accepting state issued driver's licenses or identification cards unless such documents are determined by the Secretary of Homeland Security to meet minimum security requirements, including evidence that the applicant is lawfully present in the United States.

The Real ID Act contained provisions that were recommended by the 9/11 Commission. I am committed to making every effort to ensure our nation's safety, and will continue to support implementation of the 9/11 Commission's recommendations.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recently released its Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, updating its regulations to ensure the implementation of the REAL ID Act. Costs associated with compliance are estimated to exceed \$11 billion. Many states have expressed concern that this cost will prohibit them from implementing the REAL ID Act regulations by the May 11, 2008 deadline currently required by law. On March 1, 2007, the DHS announced that it will allow states to use up to 20% of their Homeland Security grant funding to comply with REAL ID regulations. Additionally, states that are unable to reach compliance by the current deadline will be able to apply for an extension, giving them until December 31, 2009, to reach compliance.

I see great potential for allowing citizenship information on a driver's license, and it is my hope that REAL ID will facilitate this. This could provide an inexpensive alternative to a passport or the proposed PASScard that will soon be required for land and sea boarder crossings between the United States and Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean.

I believe that once implemented, REAL ID will provide a much safer and more secure document for all Americans.

With best wishes,

Cordially,
Handwritten signature of Ted Stevens in cursive.

TED STEVENS