



Homeland  
Security

May 11, 2010

Dear State Partners,

Over the past year, DHS has worked closely with Governors, State Legislators, Homeland Security Advisors, and DMV Commissioners to address longstanding concerns with REAL ID and develop a sustainable path legislatively through the PASS ID Act (S. 1261). Although DHS still supports a comprehensive solution, we recognize that we must continue to move ahead with efforts to improve the standards for state-issued driver's licenses and identification. Furthermore, in tough budget times, states must have clarity and assurances that limited funding dollars are well-spent.

Secretary Napolitano firmly believes that we share common goals in improving the security of state-issued driver's licenses: preventing terrorism, reducing fraud, and improving the reliability and accuracy of personal identification documents. Under the Driver's License Grant Security Grant Program, states have made substantial progress in improving the security and integrity of their driver's licenses and issuance processes.

As you know, the December 31<sup>st</sup> REAL ID material compliance was extended to prevent disruption to American travelers. Prior to this deadline, all states updated DHS with their progress towards material compliance. While ten states certified that they had already reached material compliance, at least twenty-seven states either certified that they would be able to meet material compliance by the end 2010 or that they would reach all of its operational requirements. This represents a considerable advancement, and we commend those states that are leading the way to improve security and reduce fraud in their states. Many of these benchmarks are the same as those developed by consensus through the PASS ID Act. Furthermore, these advances are more than just checking a box, they are commonsense, good-government security standards such as verifying the legal status of a driver's license applicant or having a security plan for your DMV. We urge you to continue your work on these improvements.

Over the past several years, the Drivers Licenses Security Grant Program has made available nearly \$140,000,000 to the states, with an additional \$50,000,000 to be made available in FY 2010 funds, to assist with implementing these security procedures. To date, only about \$9,000,000 has been drawn down from those funds by the states. DHS is regularly asked by members of Congress, as well as the Office of Management and Budget, if these funds are still needed by the states, and whether these funds should be reallocated to other efforts. As both the states and the Federal government face increasingly tough budgeting decisions, it is more important than ever that these available funds be utilized.

At this juncture, the May 2011 final compliance deadline for REAL ID remains in effect. We will do everything that we can to assist states in meeting this goal. The Secretary has acknowledged the significant cost, legal, and privacy concerns that have hampered states' abilities to

fully comply with REAL ID. As a start, the President's Fiscal Year 2011 Budget includes funding to eliminate the user fees charted for use of the **Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE)** system used to electronically verify immigration status to ensure that these fees are not hampering use of this important capability.

States must continue making progress towards greater driver's license and personal identification security. However, DHS continues to welcome feedback from states and other vital stakeholders on ways in which DHS can further decrease implementation concerns. DHS is committed to fulfilling the important 9/11 commission recommendation of establishing stronger standards for state-issued personal identification documents. Should you have any questions, please contact the DHS Office of Intergovernmental Affairs at 202-282-9310 or the Screening Coordination Office at (202) 447-3781.

Sincerely,



Juliette Kayyem  
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Office of Intergovernmental Affairs