



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

"Fiasco: The Governor's Plan to Grant Illegal Aliens Driver's Licenses in New York State."

CATHARINE YOUNG December 17, 2007

NYS SENATE MAJORITY TASKFORCE ON IMMIGRATION ISSUES REPORT ON GOVERNOR SPITZER'S DRIVER'S LICENSE PLAN

The New York State Senate Majority Task Force on Immigration today released a comprehensive report on Governor Spitzer's plan to grant driver's licenses to illegal aliens. The report entitled "*Fiasco: The Governor's Plan to Grant Illegal Aliens Driver's Licenses in New York State*" is the first legislative report that provides a detailed analysis of the withdrawn plan and its potential impact on New

York State.

"From the announcement back on September 21st to its long overdue withdrawal nearly two months later, this report provides not only a comprehensive look back at the process surrounding Governor Spitzer's ill-advised illegal alien driver's proposal but it will also serve as point of reference on this issue,"

Senator Frank Padavan (Queens), Chair of the NYS Senate Majority Task Force on Immigration said.

"The report clearly illustrates that the Governor's withdrawn plan would be in violation of the REAL ID Act and also shows the deep and troubling impact granting driver's licenses to illegal aliens would have on New York state. As we move forward, I am hopeful that this report will help keep the collective consciousness of all New Yorkers alive about the numerous lessons learned from the fiasco surrounding Governor Spitzer's illegal alien proposal"

The report discusses the specifics of the Governor's plan, illegal immigration in New York, and how the plan ran counter to the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission and in direct violation of the Federal REAL ID. The report also provides detailed examination of the legislation introduced in the State Senate that will prohibit issuing a driver's license to an illegal alien.

Last month, during a Special Legislative Session, the State Senate passed legislation (S.6484), with bipartisan support, requiring applicants for driver's licenses and non-driver identification cards to provide proof of citizenship or lawful presence in the United States. The legislation awaits action in the State Assembly.

Senator John Flanagan (2nd Senate District) said:
"This report outlines what most New Yorkers already knew - Governor Spitzer's proposal was wrong for our state. This shortsighted and dangerous

plan was hugely unpopular and the fact that it has been rejected is a victory for our residents. We must continue to strengthen the laws of our state to make sure that licenses are only provided to those who are in the country legally and that this ill-conceived policy is never revisited."

Senator Kenneth P. LaValle said: "As a member of the NYS Senate Majority Task Force on Immigration, I have studied this issue and remain steadfast in my position that granting drivers licenses to undocumented aliens is a clear threat to public safety and sends a wrong message to hardworking, law-abiding New Yorkers. New Yorkers cannot and should not forget that 18 of the 19 hijackers involved in the 9-11 attack obtained drivers licenses to get through security points and kill Americans. The Senate has acted to address such illegal transactions by passing a measure that would prohibit the state from issuing a driver's license or non-driver identification card to an individual without a social

security number or satisfactory proof of authorized presence in the United States. This bill also ensures that New York State is in compliance with the federal

REAL ID Act's

requirements for verifying the legal immigration status of driver's license applicants. It is my hope that the Assembly will give the Task Force report serious consideration when revisiting this issue and vote to protect the rights of our citizens and the very foundation of our democracy."

Senator Vincent L. Leibell (40th Senate District), Chair, New York State Senate Standing Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs said: "The Governor's attempt to issue driver's licenses to illegal aliens was a dangerous policy that placed all New Yorkers at serious risk. Anyone who has any concern for our state's security could foresee that such a proposal not only demonstrated a complete contempt for existing laws designed to protect public safety, but also showed a shocking

willingness to compromise the security of our citizens for political motives. In this day and age, when New York is such a serious target for those who wish to do us harm, we cannot forget the serious jeopardy that this attempted action by the Governor would have caused. We cannot forget the danger that this attempted action could have thrust upon the people of our state. To classify this measure as a fiasco is a polite characterization of one of the most flawed public policy moves in New York State's history."

Senator Serphin R. Maltese said: "This report investigates a myriad of factors connected with Governor Spitzer's plan to give drivers' licenses to illegal immigrants and clearly spells out how this ill-conceived idea would have opened a 'Pandora's Box' of problems for our state and our nation. A driver's license is the most important personal document we have in our country and we should continue to ensure that the integrity of this document is not compromised."

Senator Dale M. Volker (R-C-I, Depew) said: "This extensive report from the Senate Majority Task Force on Immigration reinforces our position that Governor Spitzer's Illegal Alien Drivers License program would have been a disaster for our state and nation. The attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 are still fresh on our minds and the facts regarding the terrorist hijackers who participated in these premeditated attacks were clear--they had legal identification documentation that assisted them in acquiring rental cars and opening bank accounts that provided them resources to carry out their crimes. For the Governor to outright dismiss the security needs of our state and nation and provide illegal aliens legal documentation was dangerous and inconceivable and I am pleased that he has rescinded his ill-advised plan.

Established in 1994, the New York State Senate Majority Taskforce on Immigration has studied issues related to immigration, including specifically,

illegal immigration and border security. With Senator Padavan as the Task Force chair, the Task Force has issued groundbreaking reports examining immigration's impact on state and local governments.

Previous reports by the Task Force include "Our Teeming Shore," released in 1994 and "The Golden Door" released in 2005, which reviewed the federal and state response to terrorism and described the need for federal-state cooperation with regard to illegal immigration.

Attached is a copy of the New York State Senate Majority Task Force on Immigration Report entitled "*Fiasco: The Governor's Plan to Grant Illegal Aliens Driver's Licenses in New York State.*"

Comprehensive Report Provides Detailed Analysis of Withdrawn Plan