



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Senate Issues Report On Drivers' License Plan

James L. Seward

The New York State Senate Majority Task Force on Immigration has released a comprehensive report on Governor Spitzer's plan to grant drivers' licenses to illegal aliens. The report, "*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Aliens Driver's Licenses in New York State*" is the first legislative report that provides a detailed analysis of the withdrawn plan and its potential impact on New York State.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 in September to its withdrawal nearly two months later, the report provides not only a comprehensive look at the process surrounding Governor Spitzer's ill-advised proposal but it will also serve as point of reference on the issue. The report clearly illustrates that the governor's plan would violate federal law and it also shows the deep and troubling impact on the state of granting drivers' licenses to illegal aliens.

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 act.

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 drivers' licenses and non-driver identification cards to provide proof of citizenship or lawful presence in the United States. The legislation awaits action in the assembly.

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.

The governor's attempt to issue drivers' 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. 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 the proposal would have caused.

The report investigates a myriad of factors related to the plan and clearly spells out how the 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 it is not compromised.

The extensive report reinforces my position that Governor Spitzer's 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.

Established in 1994, the New York State Senate Majority Task Force on Immigration has studied issues related to immigration, including specifically, illegal immigration and border security. The task force has issued groundbreaking reports examining immigration's impact on state and local governments.

For a copy of the report, contact my office.