



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Speaks Out Against Measure to Give Illegal Immigrants Driver Licenses

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| ISSUE: **DRIVER'S LICENSES FOR IMMIGRANTS**



Senator Patty Ritchie joined colleagues Wednesday to voice her opposition to a measure that would pave the way for illegal immigrants to obtain driver licenses.

Known as the “Green Light Bill,” the legislation—being pushed through the Senate and Assembly by Democrats—would permit illegal immigrants to apply for standard driver licenses using forms of foreign identification.

At Wednesday's press conference, Ritchie and colleagues raised concerns that doing so would leave county clerks and employees at local Departments of Motor Vehicles offices unable to verify the authenticity of the identification. In addition, lawmakers also pointed to the fact that the measure is an unfunded mandate that would stick counties with the bill for hiring employees to manage an influx of applicants.

"Our state is facing very serious challenges when it comes to things like affordability and job creation and the fact that in the remaining days of session we are focusing on providing those who are in our country illegally with driver licenses is concerning to say the very least," said Senator Ritchie.

"I wholeheartedly oppose this measure, which could open our state up to security risks, lead to voter fraud and saddle local governments with another added expense."

More than two-thirds of states do not allow illegal immigrants to drive at all. The handful of states permitting illegal immigrants to obtain driver licenses require substantially tighter proof of identification, and do not solely rely on foreign documents for identification purposes. Many impose limitations on driving to incentivize naturalization. For example, some states offer the licenses for a limited time or for a limited purpose. Others require the applicant file for citizenship or proof that the applicant has become a dependent of a state taxpayer.

In addition, many states—including New York—use their DMVs to enroll voters, and the legislation--allowing foreign identification that cannot be verified--would create new concerns over voter fraud. Unlike 35 other states, New York does not have any voter identification laws.