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DOZENS OF SINGHS, KIMS, CHENS, PATELS, AND RODRIGUEZES RALLY WITH SENATOR LIU IN SUPPORT OF THE MISTAKEN IDENTITY PREVENTION ACT

Flushing, NY - Flanked by New Yorkers representing some of the most popular names in the city, State Senator John Liu rallied outside the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) in College Point in support of the Mistaken Identity Prevention Act (S10729), legislation establishing new procedures for the DMV to verify an individual's identity before suspending or revoking their driver's license.

Senator Liu was joined by dozens of Singhs, Kims, Chens, Patels, and Rodriguezes, common surnames of New Yorkers who too often are wrongfully blamed for the infractions caused by someone else with a similar name. Liu introduced the bill after constituents suffered cases of mistaken identity in which the DMV attempted to suspend the driver's licenses of individuals with common last names without verifying their identity using readily available information.

The Mistaken Identity Prevention Act would require the DMV to match an individual's full legal name with at least two additional independent identifiers, such as date of birth or height, before imposing an adverse administrative action such as suspension or revocation. The bill would also allow the individual to submit an affidavit asserting mistaken identity, which would immediately stay the adverse action until the case is resolved.

State Senator John Liu stated, "Nobody should have their driver's license suspended due to a case of mistaken identity, yet we've seen multiple cases of this at the DMV. Driver's licenses are among the most important documents in modern life, critical for everything from getting to and from work to accessing basic services. The responsibility for keeping track of its records should be on the DMV to ensure its procedures are correct, not on New Yorkers to prove they are someone they're not. Moreover, the DMV must exercise greater diligence when its enforcement actions are appealed."

Assembly Member Ron Kim stated, "No New Yorker deserves to be punished or negatively impacted because of their last name and shoddy bureaucratic practices. I look forward to working with Senator Liu and our colleagues to pass the Mistaken Identity Prevention Act, which will help avoid future cases like these by ensuring the DMV follows a thorough and methodical protocol for confirming a person's identity. If we minimize the chances for human error, we can make the system fairer for all."

Assembly Member Larinda C. Hooks stated, “My office has been helping a constituent whose health coverage lapsed because her identity got tangled up with a stranger's in another state. She did everything right and is still paying for someone else's mistake. No one should lose their license, or their health care, over a mix-up they didn't create. The Mistaken Identity Prevention Act is common sense: verify first, suspend second.”

Assembly Member Nily Rozic stated, “Every New Yorker deserves the assurance that their identity is properly protected and that their data is handled accurately and responsibly. I support Senator Liu’s Mistaken Identity Prevention Act, which strengthens accountability and helps ensure that no one is unfairly penalized because of a shared name. Our government has a responsibility to get it right, and this legislation is an important step toward protecting New Yorkers’ rights.”

Javier Crespo, a Queens resident who nearly had his license taken away due to a ticket issued hours away to a different person on a day he was working in Manhattan, stated, “The DMV unfairly punished me for something I did not do, and even when I provided evidence that they have the wrong guy, they still came after me. Thankfully, Senator Liu is introducing this legislation to make sure it doesn’t happen again.”

After the DMV mistook another Queens resident for an individual with the same name and threatened to suspend his driver’s license over tickets issued to him while he was outside the country, the resident reached out to Senator Liu’s office for assistance.

The individual, who wishes to remain anonymous, stated, “The DMV tried to suspend my driver’s license for tickets that weren’t even mine and were somehow issued to me when I was in another country, even after I provided evidence that I wasn’t even here. I reached out to Senator Liu’s office for help, and they were able to resolve the matter with the DMV, but no one should need to go through this just to prove their identity. We need to pass the Mistaken Identity Prevention Act to prevent this from happening to others.”

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