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JACOBS PASSES LEGISLATION TO PREVENT DMV FROM SELLING DRIVER DATA

Assures drivers can “opt-out” so information will be kept private

(Albany, NY) – New York State Senator Chris Jacobs (60th SD) today announced approval of legislation he sponsored that will force the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to comply with regulations that enable drivers to protect the confidentiality of their personal information.

“Only in Albany could we find a state agency purposefully and willfully ignoring a state law that would protect New York residents, without any repercussions,” said Jacobs. “This legislation mandates that DMV will clearly and prominently place opt-out information on all its forms, as well as its website, and it is a positive first step in rectifying this situation.”

While serving as Erie County Clerk, Jacobs discovered that the DMV had been selling the personal data of New York State drivers to private companies and reaping millions in profit. Further investigation revealed the agency had been ignoring a state law that required they allow drivers the opportunity to protect their privacy by refusing to provide opt-out information on their forms.

As County Clerk, and now State Senator, Jacobs said repeated attempts to get the Department of Motor Vehicles to adhere to the existing opt-out requirements to assure drivers can enforce their right to keep their data private have fallen on deaf ears and that a legislative fix is now the best course of action to force the agency to comply.

“It is sad and frustrating that you have to pass a law to compel a state agency to abide by an existing law, but that is what it has come to,” said Jacobs. “Since the DMV has not managed to make this opt-out information public, my legislation will specifically direct them on how to do so.”

The Senator said the primary motivation for pushing for the bill’s passage was that beyond the unwelcome intrusion from solicitors and advertisers who purchase these lists and then inundate people with barrages of phone calls, mail and electronic communications, a safety factor exists.

“I sponsor Senior Scam prevention seminars in my district to help educate and protect seniors and in virtually every one of them, an elderly person asks about this issue and why they can’t protect their information from being sold,” said Jacobs. “In this digital age when we learn of breaches of private information on an all too frequent basis, the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles should help protect residents and adhere to the laws that they are obligated to obey,” the Senator concluded.

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