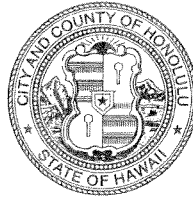


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MUFI HANNEMANN  
MAYOR



Statement of

Mufi Hannemann  
Mayor of Honolulu  
State of Hawaii

before the

Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management,  
the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia  
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
United States Senate

March 26, 2007

Good afternoon, Chairman Akaka, Ranking Member Voinovich, and Senators:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the impact of the REAL ID Act on the City and County of Honolulu.

My name is Mufi Hannemann and I am mayor of the City and County of Honolulu. I am pleased to introduce Dennis Kamimura, who is our licensing administrator and the person responsible for overseeing our driver licensing program.

Although the City and County of Honolulu is only one of Hawaii's four counties that will be impacted by the provisions of the REAL ID Act, Honolulu issues licenses to 70 percent of the 867,000 drivers in the State of Hawaii. Moreover, all of the state's driver license computer records are stored in Honolulu's computer system.

We wholeheartedly agree that the tragic events of September 11 require the strengthening of the security, standards, procedures, and requirements for the issuance of driver licenses and identification cards, but we have several major concerns with the implementation of this law, as proposed in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that was released by the Department of Homeland Security.

## **Funding**

Our first concern is funding. We estimate that the one-time cost to implement this system will be \$7.67 million and the ongoing expenses will total \$17.88 million during the first five years of the program. About 90 percent of this \$25.55-million expense will be incurred by the City and County of Honolulu. Although the Department of Homeland Security announced that 20 percent of the state's Homeland Security Grant Program funds will be made available during the 2007 grant cycle, most of these funds have already been dedicated. We ask that these costs be borne by the federal government.

## **Verification Process**

The act requires that we refuse to issue a driver license or identification card to a person holding a license or card issued by another jurisdiction. This is similar to a provision of the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act, which requires commercial drivers to have one and only one license at any given time. This requirement is supported by the Commercial Driver's License Information System (CDLIS), which has been operating in all 50 states and the District of Columbia since 1992.

CDLIS consists of a central site and nodes in each jurisdiction. Access to CDLIS is provided through a secure private network operated by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) and *cannot* be accessed through the public Internet. Each site connected to the private network has its access controlled by several security mechanisms. Neither the State of Hawaii nor the AAMVA is aware of any privacy breaches of CDLIS since it went into development in 1989.

On August 10, 2005, Congress passed the transportation reauthorization bill, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), and authorized \$28 million to modernize CDLIS. We recommend leveraging this project and its federal funding to expand the scope of the CDLIS modernization effort to support an all-driver pointer system for non-commercial driver license and identification cards. Inasmuch as all jurisdictions are familiar with the CDLIS program and the all-driver pointer system would use the same principles as CDLIS, use of this technology would be more efficient than expending public money to create a new system.

The act also requires us to verify, with the issuing agency, the validity of identification documents an applicant presents. The act would require us to have access to five additional national databases:

- Social Security On-Line Verification system (SSOLV) for Social Security cards;

- Department of State for passport and consular report of birth abroad;
- Electronic Verification and Vital Events (EVVE) for birth and marriage certificates;
- Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) for permanent resident status (I-551), employment authorization (I-766), or U.S. certificate of citizenship or naturalization; and
- Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) to verify the duration of lawful status for student aliens.

At present, almost all jurisdictions are using the SSOLV, which requires enhancements due to its unreliability. Several states are using SAVE but that system requires major improvements to ensure appropriate functionality to operate in real time and with accessibility and reliability. Several states are testing EVVE; however, the system will not be fully operational until December 2009. There is no electronic accessibility to SEVIS and or the Department of State database. We should not be required to use systems that are unreliable or under development. These systems should be developed and tested before placing the burden on local jurisdictions and the public that we serve. Additionally, we believe that federal agencies operating these systems should be prohibited from charging jurisdictions transaction fees that only increase our operating costs.

### **Reenrollment**

The proposed rules require that all licensed drivers and individuals issued identification cards be reenrolled within five years. The majority of our licensed drivers and those issued state identification cards have a six-year expiration period. We will face increased costs and tremendous public inconvenience to meet this shortened re-enrollment period. We recommend that the period be at least seven years.

### **Waiver**

To facilitate the processing of all applicants, we recommend that applicants who are 72 years or older be granted waivers from the verification requirements of the act. Similarly, individuals who are required to undergo the same or a more stringent verification process for federal identification be granted waivers. Lastly, if an applicant has undergone the verification process in one jurisdiction and has been issued a REAL ID compliant driver license or identification card, the verification process by the gaining jurisdiction should be waived.

## **Conclusion**

Practical considerations aside, the City and County of Honolulu cannot afford to implement the requirements of the act without initial and continuing federal funding. If funding is provided, the time limits for implementation of the program, without the required electronic verification systems, will place an enormous burden on the driver licensing staff and be a tremendous inconvenience to the public. To ensure long-term success, a more realistic implementation plan should be developed with input from the jurisdictions who bear the burden of issuing driver licenses and identification cards.

Thank you for granting me the opportunity to provide our perspective on this issue.