



May 12, 2020

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Robin Vos
Assembly Speaker
Wisconsin
President, NCSL

Martha R. Wigton
Director
House Budget & Research
Office
Georgia
Staff Chair, NCSL

Tim Storey
Executive Director

RE: REAL ID Implementation Challenges

Dear Chairman Wicker:

On behalf of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the bipartisan organization representing the legislatures of our nation's states, commonwealths and territories, we thank you for your tireless efforts in working to extend the full implementation date of REAL ID requirements. Further, we appreciate all the work you and your staff have done to draw attention to the many issues surrounding REAL ID implementation that still remain and will require additional work to improve the nation's REAL ID readiness.

State legislators receive countless inquiries from their constituents regarding state issued driver's licenses and the Department of Homeland Security's REAL ID program. To DHS's credit, their intergovernmental team has made themselves available for a number of engagements with state legislators and legislative staff to answer such questions – however, there remain some areas of REAL ID implementation, including identify verification, document issuance, and overall awareness of the law's requirements, that would benefit from regulatory and statutory changes.

In that vein, NCSL supports a number of regulatory changes to help states expedite issuance of REAL ID compliant licenses that would keep pace with some of the new and innovative technological innovations that have been made available since the Act was signed into law. Specifically, states would benefit from an update to the list of acceptable Real ID identity verification documents that matches the forms of an ID already accepted by the Transportation Security Administration, such as military IDs, Transportation Worker Identification Cards, or trusted traveler cards. Other supportive measures that may require statutory changes to the law would focus on clarifying the authority of states to accept electronically verification of documents through existing federal and state systems rather than requiring paper documents, which would significantly reduce costs to states.

Additionally, we believe that there remains a lack of awareness of the law's requirements, especially for American's who may not be frequent fliers. To that end, we would welcome a unified marketing plan from DHS, in order to intensify public outreach that is aimed at educating more American citizens, avoiding excessive delays and minimizing additional costs to states. Of course, as members of the legislative branch, we recognize that an executive branch agency may require additional appropriations in order to carry out certain functions and we would support

dedicated funding to DHS for a national marketing campaign. Similarly, we would urge Congress to appropriate REAL ID state grant funds as it initially did just over decade ago so that states are best able to assist their citizens in acquiring a REAL ID compliant state issued driver's license, especially in what is likely to be a negative fiscal environment for the foreseeable future.

NCSL looks forward to continuing to work with you to ensure the successful implementation of REAL ID. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact NCSL staff Ben Husch (202-624-7779 or ben.husch@ncsl.org).

Sincerely,



Representative Stephen Handy
NCSL Natural Resources and Infrastructure
Committee Co-Chair
Utah House of Representatives



Representative Andrew McLean
NCSL Natural Resources and Infrastructure
Committee Co-Chair
Maine House of Representatives