



All Jurisdictions Meet Initial REAL ID Requirements

Release Date: April 2, 2008

For Immediate Release
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The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has granted REAL ID extensions to all 56 U.S. jurisdictions, ensuring that driver's licenses and ID cards across the country will achieve a higher security standard, and that all will continue to be acceptable for official purposes after the May 11, 2008 deadline mandated by Congress in the REAL ID Act of 2005.

Maine, which had been the only state not granted an extension, committed today to take significant additional steps to achieve a level of security commensurate with REAL ID. Specifically, Maine Governor John Baldacci will seek legislation to halt Maine's current practice of issuing licenses to those not lawfully present in the United States. Maine will also begin capturing and retaining photographs of individuals applying for a state ID, even if no ID is issued.

Governor Baldacci has further pledged to submit legislation today to implement three key security measures: entering into an agreement with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and utilize the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Program to verify DHS documents presented by non-citizens; setting the term of any license issued to a lawfully present non-citizen to expire when the alien's legal status ends; and committing to evaluate ways to ensure that customers do not have more than one Maine ID, such as facial recognition or similar technology.

Maine's agreement to the measures requested by the department enabled the state to obtain the needed extension. REAL ID extensions are valid until Dec. 31, 2009, when states must upgrade the security of their systems, to include a check for lawful status of all applicants, for their licenses and ID cards to be acceptable for official purposes.

The need for secure documentation was a core 9/11 Commission finding. REAL ID addresses their finding by setting specific requirements that states must adopt for compliance in four key areas: (1) information and security features that must be incorporated into each card; (2) proof of the identity and U.S. citizenship or legal status of an applicant; (3) verification of the source documents provided by an applicant; and (4) security standards for the offices that issue licenses and ID cards.

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This page was last reviewed/modified on April 2, 2008.