



**AARP New York
Albany Office**
One Commerce Plaza
Suite 706
Albany, NY 12260

T 1-866-227-7442
F 518-434-6949
TTY 1-877-434-7598
www.aarp.org/ny

September 11, 2007

The Honorable Eliot Spitzer
Governor, State of New York
State Capital
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Spitzer:

AARP is writing to share our concerns with the implementation of the Real ID Act. The Real ID Act of 2005 establishes specific standards, procedures and requirements for states to follow when issuing driver's licenses and identification cards. Cards that do not meet these standards will not be considered as sufficient proof of identity for official purposes such as boarding a commercial aircraft and accessing important government services.

As a result of the implementation of REAL ID, states will be required to change all existing licenses and ID cards that have been issued nationwide, and replace them with REAL ID Act compliant cards. The Act imposes a May 11, 2008 implementation deadline.

AARP is concerned about the various implications to individuals surrounding implementation of the REAL ID Act. First and foremost, there is great concern that providing many of the required documents needed to verify an individual's identity could prove difficult for many individuals, particularly older, lower-income, minority or rural individuals.

According to a 2006 survey by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities¹:

- Low-income people are nearly twice as likely to lack these documents as people with higher incomes;
- Residents 65 years of age and older are much more likely to lack these documents than younger residents;
- African Americans are much more likely to lack these documents than whites;
- Rural residents are more than twice as likely to lack a birth certificate or passport as non-rural-residents;
- About 11 million US citizens have neither a birth certificate nor a passport in their home; and
- Similar identification requirements for the Medicaid program have already had a significant impact on enrollment. According to a 2007 study by the Center on

New York Office
T 1 866-227-7442
F 212-644-6390
TTY 1-877-434-7598

¹ R. Greenstein, L. Ku, and S. Dean. **Survey Indicates House Bill Could Deny Voting Rights to Millions of U.S. Citizens**. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (September, 2006).

Budget and Policy Priorities², in the six months following implementation of the new requirement, states are beginning to report marked declines in Medicaid enrollment, particularly among low-income children.

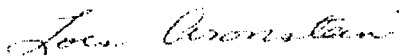
In addition, AARP is concerned that the REAL ID Act will unnecessarily increase the risk of identity theft. The creation of an interstate network of databases, as required by the REAL ID Act, containing the personal information needed to establish and verify an individual's identity could pose a considerable security risk should any of these databases be compromised.

AARP respectfully requests that you petition the federal government to repeal, amend or delay the implementation of the REAL ID Act to address the above stated concerns. Our goal is to protect older persons and all New Yorkers access to such basic rights and privileges as driving, voting and proof of identity for receiving federal benefits and services as well as to travel.

If you should have any questions or concerns on our position, please contact me at [REDACTED] or Bill Ferris at [REDACTED]

Thank you for your time and consideration of AARP's position.

Sincerely,



Lois Aronstein
New York State Director

CC: Mr. Richard Baum
Mr. Peter Pope
Mr. David Swarts

² D.C. Ross, **New Medicaid Citizenship Documentation Requirement is Taking A Toll: States Report Enrollment Is Down and Administrative Costs Are Up**. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (February, 2007).