



In this issue:

## Counterfeit IDs REAL ID Compliance Update

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### **COUNTERFEIT IDS:** A NATIONAL SECURITY, PUBLIC SAFETY THREAT

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#### **Florida pair restarted international document mill after slap on the wrist in 2015**

Angelica Bianco and Michael Morales, both 23 years old, were arrested in March for running a fake identity document mill that operated across the world. The pair sold driver's licenses and Social Security cards to customers in at least 13 states, Canada, and even took orders from the Middle East. They advertised their highly illegal industry openly on the internet, with Youtube and Instagram pages. County tax collector, Mike Fasano, said they were selling driver's licenses "like they're candy on a street corner". Most of their customers were said to be underage drinkers, but at least some reportedly used the documents in retail fraud schemes.

Bianco and Morales were actually arrested for a similar scheme back in 2015.

However, justice was largely avoided as the two were offered pre-trial intervention that only levied a 2-year probation sentence. This is yet another example of fake IDs not being taken seriously enough in our criminal justice system. We have yet to see if they'll get a third chance to restart production.



Image of the duo's online fake ID marketing. Photo from Fox13

[Click here for the story](#)

### **Marin County man arrested with 19 California driver's licenses**

A man was arrested in Marin County, California on counts of identity theft and fraud after investigators found 19 counterfeit California driver's licenses in his possession. Each license had the same photo but different names. He used the licenses to purchase new MacBook Pro computers and iRobot vacuums. Authorities initiated the case when a credit card holder reported a fraudulent charge that the suspect made under his name. When the suspect arrived at a shipping center to pick up his fraudulently purchased item, the employee, who had planned a sting operation with police, stalled the suspect until the arresting officers showed up.



The suspect had in his possession 19 fake California Driver's licenses, all with the same photo but different names. Photo from Huron Daily Tribune.

[Click here for the story](#)

## Keeping IDentities Safe presents to Congress on fake IDs and national security

The Document Security Alliance (DSA), an association of security industry professionals, held its Congressional Briefing on March 29 at the U.S. Capitol to educate legislators and their staff on the threat that fake and fraudulent IDs pose to our public safety and national security. Representative David Young introduced the DSA panel, featuring Max Bluestein from Keeping IDentities Safe, who spoke on the fake ID epidemic and recommended a national strategy to confront it. Presentations on Social Security cards and birth certificates were made by other DSA members. The event drew staff from many different offices, who received a hands-on demonstration of what sophisticated counterfeit

driver's licenses and source documents look like - and what nefarious purposes they can be used for.



Rep. David Young introduces a DSA panel on fake IDs, including our staff

## **Pennsylvania driver's licenses continue to be among the most counterfeited in the country**

The State of Pennsylvania has been a top target for the world's biggest document mills since 2010, when the counterfeit ID epidemic began. It started with IDChief, a Chinese based company that mass produced fake Pennsylvania driver's licenses with convincing security features and scannable bar codes and exported tens of thousands into our borders. IDChief created the marketing and operational model for overseas vendors to advertise and sell cheap, high quality fake IDs over the internet and smuggle them into the U.S. by hiding them in packages full of trinkets and toys.

After a concentrated public effort, IDChief was finally shut down in 2012, but dozens of other document mills have filled the vacuum, including some likely run by IDChief affiliates. To the right are four of the top counterfeiters still making PA IDs. Fifteen of the 44 biggest fake ID makers worldwide are actively selling high quality counterfeit Pennsylvania documents. The colors in the map above show which states are the most targeted by the major vendors, red being the highest. Those vendors, both domestic and foreign, sell Pennsylvania driver's licenses and IDs at prices ranging from \$60 to \$135 through websites both on the clearnet and darknet or via secure email servers.

Almost all are "scannable" and many include an emulation of the latest raised keystone security feature embedded in the PA license, making them indistinguishable from genuine documents to anyone but the expertly trained

eye. Due to weak security features and local printing variances in genuine documents, Pennsylvania is among the most counterfeited U.S. driver's license in the world. Until security features are improved, PennDOT will continue to be targeted by underage drinkers, impostors, thieves, fugitives, and potential terrorists both here and abroad. The colors in the map above show how many of the 44 major vendors sell documents from each state, red being the most targeted.

Fake IDs aren't just used for underage drinking. Driver's licenses are the preferred form of identification in the United States and are used for a whole host of purposes, including opening a bank account, obtaining a United States Passport, boarding an airplane, and verifying identity for employment. That is what makes them such a valuable document and why four U.S. Senators cited Chinese-based ID counterfeiters as a national security threat. They are sought after by identity thieves, habitual drunk drivers, convicted felons seeking guns, and even terrorists. PennDOT must improve the quality and security features of its driver's license to prevent them from falling into the wrong hands. When it comes to driver's licenses, our national security and public safety are only as strong as the weakest link. Until Pennsylvania's identity documents are secured, we are all vulnerable.

### **Who buys fake IDs?**

Did you know that fake IDs are used for so much more than underage drinking? They are a toolbox for serious criminals and "weapons" for terrorists. Share Keeping IDentities Safe's new video, "Who Buys Fake IDs?" to spread awareness of how fake IDs represent a very real public safety and national security threat.





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## **Lawmakers in Oregon and Washington are finally acknowledging the need to meet REAL ID standards**

Oregon and Washington State have long resisted the security standards from the REAL ID Act, being among the last few hold outs as the vast majority of the country moves towards compliance. However, with the January 2018 airport enforcement deadline looming, legislators from those states are finally seeing how crucial the upgrades may be. Washington state Senator Randi Becker, said, "People in the state of Washington are going to be upset when they have to go present a passport to get on an airplane. I think it's something we really have to make sure is done." Oregon's DMV said in a state Senate hearing that it is looking at issuing compliant licenses, but it may take until 2019.

[Click here for the story](#)

## **North Dakota legislature paves way for REAL ID**

Following a North Dakota Senate vote of 43 to 2, legislators have authorized North Dakota to meet the REAL ID standards. The common sense move in the state legislature will allow the state's residents to be able to board commercial airliner in 2018 without having to obtain US passports or to stand in long TSA lines for secondary inspection, like the noncompliant states.

[Click here for the story](#)

## **Montana legislators scramble to comply with REAL ID**

Montana is one of only four states currently deemed noncompliant with the REAL ID Act by the Department of Homeland Security and state lawmakers are "scrambling" to correct that. If not, constituents will face REAL ID enforcement at airports in January 2018, along with residents of Maine, Minnesota, and

Missouri. State Senator Cohenour, a Democrat, explained to WBUR what the REAL ID deadline means and why the state should allow its residents the choice to obtain REAL ID compliant driver's licenses.

[Click here to listen to the interview](#)

### **Kentucky plans to issue REAL ID compliant licenses in 2018**

Kentucky has three million residents with driver's licenses and over 30% of them fly on commercial airplanes each year. The state legislature plans to issue REAL ID compliant licenses starting in 2018, which will mean its residents It will be a challenge for the state to meet the 2020 federal deadline. The decision to allow people to "opt out" without understanding that decision will impact their access to airports will lead to many headaches and lost vacation trips!

[Click here for the story](#)

### **Most states move toward REAL ID compliance while other states dally**

Oklahoma was one of the first states to enact an "anti-REAL ID" law in 2007, followed by eight more states. This rush to legislation was all based on conjecture, as the REAL ID regulations weren't even issued until 2008. Incidentally, nine states "sat out" 10 years of federally funded opportunities to strengthen driver's license security rules covering proof of identity. Meanwhile, 41 other states surged forward, undertaking internal security tightening along with the requisite legal changes, especially establishing state laws that clearly authorized state agencies to require documented proof of lawful presence. 26 states are fully compliant today, and another four will soon join them.

Oklahoma just became the first of the nine laggard states to repeal its anti-REAL ID law and direct REAL ID compliance. On March 2nd, Governor Mary Fallin signed a bill compelling the state to comply with REAL ID as soon as possible. But, the state's Department of Public Safety estimates that it may take two years before Oklahoma can begin issuing REAL ID compliant driver's licenses. Until that happens, Oklahoma will need new time extensions by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to allow state residents to board commercial airlines in 2018. The other eight non compliant states with laws prohibiting their driver's license agencies from compliance have yet to remove their restrictive barriers. Five of the eight are currently subject to REAL ID enforcement actions by the federal government. Three of those eight received short-term time extensions based on legislative promises to comply. Pennsylvania is one of those, where we at Keeping IDentities Safe have always weighed in, testifying against the original anti-REAL ID law and recently publishing educational documents aimed at state

legislators, namely "Pennsylvania's Federal Facilities and Military Bases: Impact of REAL ID Rule Enforcement on Pennsylvania Driver's Licenses and IDs" and "Phase 4 of REAL ID Enforcement: Airports". Both reports describe the costs and hassles faced by the traveling public if they can't use their state driver's licenses as proof of identification. For Pennsylvania residents, we estimated that the costs would be a minimum of \$400 million to a maximum of almost \$1 billion in 2018, the first year of enforcement.

We are seeing progress in other places, too. Legislators in the following states are moving bills through Committee and/or House or Senate votes: Minnesota, Washington, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and Missouri. However, of these comes one strange solution being considered in Washington State, where only U.S. citizens will qualify for REAL ID compliant IDs. That's because Washington State has offered Enhanced Driver's Licenses and IDs that allow border crossing without passports to U.S. citizens for nearly ten years and the legislature is taking a low cost solution. The consequence of this approach is that the state's legal residents who are not U.S. citizens will not be eligible for a REAL ID compliant driver's license. The legislature is resisting any movement toward stopping the practice of providing driver's licenses to illegal immigrants. Because of its very low standards for proof of identity and proof of residence within the state, the state of Washington will remain the "go-to" destination for identity thieves, registered sex offenders seeking to hide their identities, and illegal immigrants from neighboring states to obtain driver's licenses. Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton has complained that the pending bills in his state's legislature don't allow for non-compliant driver's licenses to be issued to illegal immigrants. However, state legislators have resisted such a provision, stating that REAL ID compliance should not become entangled with immigration issues. Maine Governor Paul LePage has stated that it's time for the state legislature to repeal a 2007 anti-REAL ID law.

Montana, which has one of the most restrictive anti-REAL ID laws, has yet to introduce any measure to change that law and will likely face enforcement. Montana's Attorney General, Tim Fox, and both of its U.S. Senators stated their continued opposition to REAL ID compliance in November 2016, asserting the typical misinformation of federal overreach and privacy violations. Montana's current driver's license regime will remain to have ample security weaknesses, starting with the antiquated physical security of many of the local county buildings where driver's license applications are submitted and continuing with an absence of background checks on state DMV employees and local county personnel that issue driver's licenses. Montana's legislature only meets for 90 days once every two years, appropriately on the "odd" years, including 2017. The last date for consideration of a repeal of the state's 2007 anti-REAL ID law is April 25, 2017, after which the next legislative session won't start until January

2019. Beginning January 22, 2018, Montana residents will need an alternative ID, such as a federal passport, to board commercial airlines.



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## A Note from KIDS President Brian Zimmer

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A New York attack, a shooting on the west coast, and multiple reports of non-citizen voting all combined to compel me to check out the DMV myself in my home state of Virginia. In my October 2016 visit, I learned that little meaningful REAL ID compliance activity had occurred and that the DHS time extensions awarded Virginia were undeserved. The following stories explain why this is so important:

Ahmad Rahami is now awaiting federal trial for his "pressure cooker bombing" and use of an illegal handgun to shoot two police officers in New York City last September. His elaborate plot involved getting a fraudulent ID in order to obtain

the gun to carry out the attack. Rahami was barred from purchasing firearms in New Jersey, his state of residence, due to a prior arrest for domestic violence for attacking family members. But he needed the pistol to carry out his terrorist plot so he thought of another way: Virginia. First, he rented a small house in Roanoke to claim residency and went to a Roanoke Walmart to purchase a fishing license. Next, he went to a Virginia DMV with the fishing license, in lieu of a New Jersey driver's license, along with his proof of residency and was able to obtain a state ID card under an alternate spelling of his name. He used that ID to skirt his firearm restriction and purchase a pistol that he used to shoot police. Rahami's only use of his Roanoke rental home aside from using it to claim residency was as a safe house to construct bombs. The Virginia problem gets deeper, as Rahami's personal journal referenced Anwar al-Awlaki, the American-born Muslim cleric and al-Qaeda operative who inspired countless other terrorists online and at a Falls Church, VA mosque. The exploitation of Virginia's lax security isn't new. It's the same method used by the 9/11 terrorists who covered their trail by setting up similar false claims of residency in Virginia to get state issued IDs and driver's licenses. And Virginia may continue to be targeted because of its low requirements for proof of identity. More than fifteen years after the 9/11 attacks which left more than 3,000 Americans dead, Virginia still doesn't meet REAL ID rules for proof of identity or proof of state residency. Any terrorist anxious to acquire weapons or explosives can easily get a cover address to get a Virginia driver's license or state ID.

Meanwhile on the other coast, Washington state local county election officials and Secretary of State, Kim Wyman, called for the Washington Department of Licensing (DOL) to start requiring proof of citizenship and/or lawful presence, as well as the recording of applicants' status in DOL records, in September. Washington, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania are among the only states remaining where proof of lawful presence is not routine for driver's license applicants. However, the other 20 states that do ask for proof of lawful presence don't record the actual status of applicants with green cards or non-immigrant visas nor keep images of the documents presented as proof of status. A shooting in Washington brought this lapse to the headlines when a relatively recent immigrant from Turkey, Arcan Cetin, shot several shoppers dead in a local mall in the name of ISIS. Upon his arrest, he showed police his "green card" indicating permanent legal status. He also freely admitted, perhaps boasted, that he was the shooter. A sharp-nosed local reporter later broke that the same man voted in three recent elections. The penalty for voting as a non-citizen is up to five years in prison, with a fine of \$10,000 and possible deportation. When the story picked up, local newspapers noted that, had Cetin been deported for voting illegally, the shooting wouldn't have taken place. It was later determined that the shooter had been granted citizenship at age 16 without going through naturalization educational requirements after his immigrant mother became a

citizen through a so-called "marriage visa" and that he had provided misleading statements to the arresting police officers.

The incident sparked Wyman's advocacy for REAL ID driver's license rules, an expedient way to sort non-citizens from citizens. This should be a big issue for Washington, where more than 10% of the population is non-citizen and several investigations after close elections demonstrated that non-citizens voted. However, a current bill in the state legislature to establish REAL ID compliance still skirts the issue by establishing an approach where only citizens will be entitled to REAL ID compliant driver's licenses and the rest of the state's drivers will not be required to show lawful presence.

In a tale of two states, I will show you the strong link between the REAL ID proof of citizenship requirement, preventing terrorism, and preventing noncitizen voting. Last September, Wyman and nearly 20 county auditors, across party lines, called for state law to be changed to so that proof of citizenship would be required to get a driver's license. Wyman said, "We have a tool in REAL ID ... being used successfully by elections administrators in those states where you ... can get the citizenship checked on the front end ... Until this came to light, many of the people who contacted my office had believed election officials verified citizenship as a routine part of voter registration." One of those states is Virginia, my own state of residence for most of my adult life, where proof of lawful presence is the law but not necessarily enforced at the DMV (keep reading).

The same week that officials in New Jersey, with Atlantic beaches, and officials in Washington State, with Pacific beaches, were pursuing investigations of shooting incidents by Muslim immigrants, the Indiana based Public Interest Legal Foundation released a report about noncitizen election registration and voting. That 143 page report documented extensive evidence of noncitizen voting, which I found completely convincing and very disturbing. Researchers found that in some Virginia jurisdictions, the number of people registered to vote exceeds the number of citizens eligible to vote. The researcher had a relatively small sample of eight Virginia counties, but found that 1,045 noncitizens had registered to vote (illegally). The researchers provided the names and addresses of the non-citizens to the Department of Justice, but no investigation followed. Because the Help America Vote Act of 2001 requires that state DMVs provide cooperative information to state and local election officials to confirm eligibility to vote and the Virginia DMV claims to employ the federal SAVE system to confirm lawful presence, I was dismayed that research showed so many non-citizen voters in my home state. I decided to check it out myself with many questions.

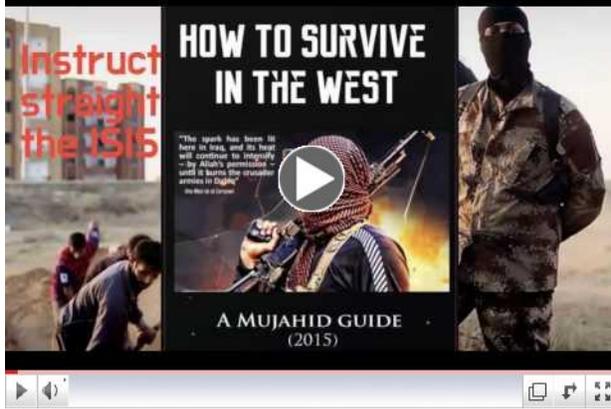
My own private investigation determined that while Virginia's laws require proof

of citizenship or lawful presence for driver's license or IDs, the state DMV puts a simple "yes/no" entry in its records systems, with a check mark identifying the type of documentary proof. The state's software apparently lacks the capability to do more than enter a description of the proof of lawful presence, such as "birth certificate, passport, or immigrant visa". I know this because I tested the state DMV by going to a local office in November 2016 and asked the clerk to record that I was a citizen and to "image" my passport and/or my birth certificate as proof. The clerk had no idea what I was talking about. Her initial reply was, "your driver's license is still valid for another 4 years. Why are you doing this? I don't know what this is about. I have to ask a supervisor."

I politely asked her if she was new on the job and she replied, "I've been here 12 years. Don't get smart!"

She walked to her supervisor nearby whom I overheard say, "there's a way to do that. Let me show you." I watched the whole operation, including the obvious fact that no image was taken of either of the documents I presented. After ten minutes, the clerk and the supervisor completed the mission of recording in DMV records that I am a citizen. When I got back to the Keeping IDentities Safe office, we initiated a Freedom of Information Act to the Virginia DMV. The documents we received showed that Virginia's DMV administrator and state officials from Pennsylvania's DMV had unsuccessfully tried to induce the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to "dumb down" requirements for proof of residency for driver's license and ID applicants. The administrators presumably undertook that effort with the permission of their respective governors! The FOIA documents also revealed that the Virginia DMV was only sporadically using the federal SAVE system to confirm the validity of documents presented by immigrant driver's license applicants and nothing about how the DMV's records systems actually capture the source identity documents!

Virginia is among the states that have enjoyed a DHS time extension for REAL ID compliance for nearly ten years. Virginia's current time extension expires in June 2017, a little more than three months from now. I truly hope Virginia doesn't receive another time extension. It must demonstrate that it's actually trying to become REAL ID compliant. Despite being the state which issued the largest number of driver's licenses and IDs to the 9/11 terrorists, Virginia's political leaders apparently have learned very little about the importance of REAL ID proof of citizenship and/or lawful presence rules with regards to voting or to terrorists purchasing weapons. And when it comes to document security, we're only as strong as the weakest link.



See how we help keep IDs out of the hands of criminals and terrorists!



Check out our Keeping Identities Safe for KIDS program, providing IDs for children!

## Keeping Identities Safe in the News:



### MAX BLUESTEIN IN THE DAILY CALLER

Fake IDs and the Truck Attack Threat



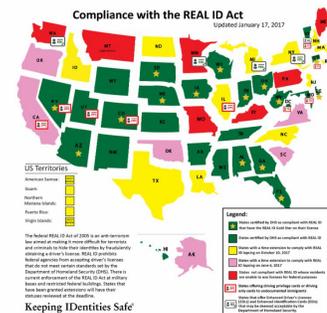
### ANDREW MEEHAN IN THE MORNING CALL

REAL ID warning signs in PA

## How are we fighting driver's license fraud?

- By raising awareness
  - By working with law enforcement
  - By helping states comply with REAL ID
  - By working with state legislators all over the country
  - By providing research
  - By working every day to protect your identity documents!
- We can only continue to do this with your support*

[Click here for more!](#)



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