

# UnReal: What the new national ID means for you

## A civil liberties briefing from the ACLU of Ohio



The federal REAL ID (Identification) Act of 2005 was signed into law on May 11, 2005. This act in effect created a national ID by requiring state IDs to meet federal requirements by May 2008. State motor vehicle departments are also required to create a national database.

Several states have opted out of Real ID because of privacy and bureaucracy concerns. The following are just some of the reasons why a national ID will prove to be a real nightmare.

**Real ID will cost even more than anticipated.** The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) concedes that the cost to the states will range from \$10.7 billion to \$14.6 billion, and adds that individuals will have to cover an additional \$7.8 billion in costs, raising the price tag for Real ID to a whopping \$23 billion. *This will likely lead to a large increase in fees next time you renew your driver's license.*

**DHS punts on privacy.** DHS acknowledges the danger of license data being scanned by third parties, but the agency fails to take action to stop the problem, and merely encourages the states to come up with a solution. The agency is also silent on the issue of encrypting the personal data that will be stored on the standardized bar codes, which would provide basic levels of protections for those with a Real ID. DHS also ignores or brushes aside the privacy dangers inherent in building massive national databases.

**Verifying your identity will be much more difficult.** Real ID's verification requirements will force Ohioans



to hunt down additional forms of identification to prove their identity. Verification of all identity documents will be required not just to obtain a Real ID, but every time they are renewed as well. Proof of address must be shown with not just one document, but two. Birth certificates must be verified with state vital records offices, and flexibility is provided only for extraordinary circumstances.

**Worsens risk of ID theft.** ID theft is about to get a whole lot easier and more lucrative. Under the regulations, you are required to present two proofs of principal address; DHS suggests using documents such as bank statements and property tax records. To prove your SSN you can present a pay stub. And to prove your identity, a birth certificate. Because all these documents will have to be scanned and stored by the DMV, the ID theft risk rises dramatically. The damage that could be done with that information by a hacker or corrupt DMV official – as well as a genuine Real ID card containing your data and the thief's picture – is frightening to contemplate.

## What can you do to stop Real ID from coming to Ohio?

To date, 17 states have enacted anti-Real ID legislation and 20 other states have bills pending—including Ohio. In May 2007, state Representative Diana Fessler (R-Bethel Township) introduced HCR 18, which calls on Congress to repeal the Real ID Act.

Some things you can do to fight Real ID:

- Call or write your local state representative and senator and urge them to support HCR 18.
- Call your federal representative and senators and

ask them to support legislation that will repeal Real ID.

- Invite an ACLU representative to your local community group to inform others on Real ID.
- Write a letter to the editor about Real ID.

For more information on what you can do to stop Real ID from coming to Ohio, log on to [www.acluohio.org](http://www.acluohio.org) and check out the ACLU's national website [www.realnightmare.org](http://www.realnightmare.org).