



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

## Seward Opposes So-Called "Green Light" Bill

JEFF BISHOP, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR June 5, 2019



**ALBANY, 06/05/19** -- State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I/Ref – Oneonta) today joined members of the Senate Republican Conference to vehemently oppose the state issuing driver's licenses to illegal immigrants.

Senator James L. Seward said, **“The thought of giving a driver’s license, a secure identification document, to someone who is intentionally breaking the law is inconceivable. This measure is bad public policy that would put lives in danger, reward lawbreakers, and send the wrong message to those who take the legal path to citizenship. It’s time we reprioritize in Albany and focus on jobs, lowering taxes, and putting law abiding citizens first.”**

The Democrat legislation, moving through the Senate and Assembly, would permit illegal immigrants to apply for standard driver's licenses using forms of foreign identification, leaving county clerks and employees at local Departments of Motor Vehicles unable to truly verify authenticity.

The New York Association of County Clerks opposes the legislation since they cannot vet documents from other countries. The change would also serve as an unfunded mandate from the state leaving counties to pick up the tab for hiring employees to deal with an influx of applicants.

According to a recent statewide Siena poll, 61 percent of New Yorkers oppose giving driver's licenses to illegals, and even wider margins oppose the move Upstate and on Long Island, where 73 and 66 percent, respectively, are opposed.

Over two-thirds of states do not allow illegal immigrants to drive at all. Many states use their DMVs to enroll voters, and New York does as well creating new concerns over voter fraud. New York does not have any voter identification laws, unlike 35 other states. The states that permit illegal immigrants to obtain licenses require substantially tighter proof of identification and may impose limitations on driving to incentivize naturalization.

While advocates claim that states freely grant licenses to illegal immigrants, that claim is patently false. For example, Utah only allows illegal immigrants to obtain licenses for a period of one-year; the District of Columbia offers limited purpose licenses; Connecticut requires that an illegal applicant file for citizenship; and many remaining states require a tax identification number, tax returns or proof that an illegal immigrant has become the dependent of a state taxpayer.

The New York Green Light bill does none of those things and creates a disincentive to naturalization when coupled with other initiatives passed by Democrats this year, like free college tuition for illegal immigrants. It also does nothing, as advocates claim, to insure that an illegal motorist remains at the scene of a serious accident if it could involve a potential felony charge which could mean deportation.