



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Tedisco

Tedisco: Driver's License a Privilege, Not a Right

SENATOR JIM TEDISCO June 5, 2019

| ISSUE: **DRIVERS LICENSE, ILLEGAL**



“It was a bad idea when former Governor Eliot Spitzer wanted to do it and it’s a bad idea now!”

That’s what Senator Jim Tedisco (R,C,I,REF-Glenville) is saying today as he joined his Senate Republican colleagues to voice his deep concern and strong opposition to the so-called “Green Light Bill” to provide driver’s licenses to those here illegally.

The sponsor of the “Green Light Bill” also has introduced a bill to compel County Clerks, who run most of the Departments of Motor Vehicles (DMVs) in New York State, to issue the licenses to those here illegally or face removal from office.

“Giving driver’s licenses to those here illegally sends the wrong message to honest, law-abiding citizens and those who are trying to do the right thing and have been in line for quite some time to become American citizens. If there is one set of hoops citizens have to jump through to earn their privileges but no standards for those here illegally, what’s the point of citizenship when you can just sneak into the front of the line and take advantage of our system? Make no mistake, if we continue on this dangerous path, we will become the United States of Non-Citizens,” said Senator Jim Tedisco (R,C,I,REF-Glenville), who in 2007 as Assembly Minority Leader, helped stop Governor Spitzer’s misguided plan to give driver’s licenses to those here illegally.

Tedisco noted that contrary to the bogus claims by advocates for the “Green-Light Bill,” federal and state courts have long ruled that driving is a privilege and that there is no fundamental right to drive.

In 2007, the New York State Court of Appeals upheld the DMV’s right to require social security numbers from driver’s license applicants. Moreover, the DMV has required driver’s license applicants to submit social security numbers for the past 24 years to combat rampant identity, bank and insurance fraud, not as a post-9/11 anti-immigration policy as advocates falsely suggest.

Senator Tedisco said that among the concerns is creating a double standard for American citizens applying for a standard license. For example, a citizen with a Social Security number would have to provide it, along with verifiable ID documents, while those here illegally would not. The bill also requires that licenses issued to those here illegally be “visually

identical” to a federal-purpose license, which is a deliberate attempt to deceive and a violation of the federal REAL ID Act. The Green-Light bill would further hurt the DMV and law enforcement from upholding their constitutional duties by prohibiting them from reporting those here illegally to federal immigration officials and stifle police investigations for car accidents and other incidents. A recent amendment to the bill requires the DMV Commissioner to notify within three days anyone whose records are sought and requires the identification of the agency seeking the records. In what other law enforcement investigation is the suspect given advance notice?

Tedisco is now sponsoring the “County Clerks Protection Act” (S.3868/A.6317) to indemnify county clerks, who run most of the state’s DMVs, from facing lawsuits or removal by the governor when they act in good faith and with a reasonable belief they are upholding their oath of office and the Constitution of the United States by refusing to issue driver’s licenses to those here illegally.

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