



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Chris Jacobs

Jacobs, Local Law Enforcement Leaders Oppose Issuance of Driver's Licenses to Illegal Immigrants

SENATOR JACOBS June 7, 2019

| ISSUE: **DRIVER'S LICENSES FOR IMMIGRANTS**



(Buffalo, New York) - State Senator Chris Jacobs was joined by Erie County Sheriff Timothy Howard and the President of the Erie County Association of Chiefs of Police, Town of Hamburg Chief Greg Wickett, stating their strong opposition to passage of legislation that would enable illegal immigrants to obtain driver's licenses in New York State.

The legislation, known as the “Green Light” bill, has been gaining momentum in the State Assembly in the final weeks of the legislative session. Jacobs said he believes it is critical to mobilize opposition, educate constituents and put state leaders on notice in an effort to keep the bill from making similar progress in the Senate.

“Those in our country illegally should not be rewarded with driver’s licenses,” said Jacobs. “As a former County Clerk who ran a large Auto Bureau system, I know first-hand the dangers this law will create. It will cause rampant voter fraud and block law enforcement’s ability to access critical DMV data to keep the public safe.”

Chief Wickett said that a primary reason the legislation has such strong opposition among law enforcement officials across the state, including him and his fellow members of the Erie County Association of Chiefs of Police, are the restrictions placed on law enforcement’s access to databases with information critical to police work.

“The Chiefs of Police in Erie County are very concerned about the consequences of granting drivers licenses to people who are in the country illegally, specifically the provisions of the bill that restrict law enforcement access to the DMV data base,” said Erie County Association of Chiefs of Police President and Town of Hamburg Chief Greg Wickett. “If this law passes as is, a police officer would not have the basic information to be able to do their job and could potentially be put in danger. We respectfully request that our legislators reconsider this bill in its entirety.”

“I, along with my fellow Sheriffs and the New Your State Sheriff’s Association, am very concerned about a provision in the Green Light legislation that blocks law enforcement and courts from criminal history checks,” said Erie County Sheriff Timothy Howard. “The necessary and proper access to criminal history provides for officer and public safety, and if undocumented individuals are granted driver’s licenses, these individuals and their history

should be accessed by law enforcement personnel as it is with every other New York State driver's license holder. The state legislature and the Governor need to address this issue and rethink the entire proposal.”

The Senator said that the proposed bill also creates a double standard, with law-abiding citizens having to provide significant amounts of identification and verifications to obtain a license while illegal immigrants would need to provide very little documentation. The double standard is magnified by the fact that law enforcement would be able to access DMV data of U.S. citizens but not illegals.

In addition to the serious public safety concerns that have been raised, Jacobs also noted a number of administrative and fiscal headaches that would be created if the bill were to become law. They include the burden placed on local officials of having to verify the veracity of foreign-issued documents, ensuring sufficient translation services would be available, and the expense of increasing local staff sizes to accommodate the 200,000 illegal immigrants who are estimated would seek licenses under the Green Light bill.

Equally alarming is the dramatically increased potential for voter fraud stemming from illegals who would use the process of getting their driver's license to illegally register to vote. None of these concerns is addressed in the proposed legislation.

“The list of serious problems created by this bill passing far outweigh the political justifications being offered by the Governor and downstate legislators,” said Jacobs. “I want to thank my counterparts in law enforcement for their support today. The magnitude of the issues they raise should make every one of my colleagues think twice, and then make sure this bill never sees the light of day,” he concluded.