



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo votes against 'Green Light Bill'

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO June 17, 2019

ALBANY – New York State Senate Deputy Minority Leader Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, today announced that he has voted against the “Green Light Bill,” which would allow illegal immigrants to apply for standard driver’s licenses using forms of foreign identification.

Deputy Minority Leader Griffo said the bill was the latest in a series of policies supported by downstate Democrats that represents a slow, deliberate degradation of the nation’s laws governing citizenship. Other examples include a bill providing illegal immigrants with free college tuition, decreasing the amount of time an individual serves for misdemeanor offenses to prevent the deportation of illegal immigrants and a push to provide free healthcare to those here illegally.

“Immigration has been a longstanding federal issue that has challenged many administrations and Congresses and cannot be addressed state by state,” Deputy Minority Leader Griffo said. “The legislation passed by the state Senate today is another example of New York State adopting laws that flaunt longstanding federal laws pertaining to citizenship. We are a nation of laws. We cannot choose which laws we want to follow for our own political gain. If we do that society starts to fall apart.”

According to two recent Siena College polls, a majority of New Yorkers oppose giving driver’s licenses to illegal immigrants. In addition, the State Association of County Clerks has

formally opposed this legislation, saying that they have no training or experience in recognizing whether a foreign passport is valid or invalid and would need substantial new training and/or personnel to handle the expected increase in applications - making this another unfunded mandate on local governments. Law enforcement officials also have expressed concerns with the bill.

"For the last several months, I have heard from law enforcement, county clerks, advocates and other stakeholders regarding the issue of providing driver's licenses to illegal immigrants," Deputy Minority Leader Griffo said. "While I respect the arguments made by those supporting this initiative, I could not support the bill that came up for a vote today in the state Senate. I am concerned about the effect that this legislation will have on public safety, that the bill will make it more difficult for law enforcement agencies and county clerks to do their jobs and that the bill will be an additional financial burden on counties that are already stretched to the limit. With session winding down, now is the time to focus on more important issues such as tax and mandate relief, growing jobs fixing our infrastructure and making our state more affordable so that residents, families and businesses don't have to look elsewhere for better opportunities."

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