



## **Arkansas prepared for federal REAL ID program, critic says feds will not enforce**

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Arkansas will be ready for an Oct. 10 deadline for driver's licenses and state-issued IDs to comply with the federal REAL ID Act in order for travelers to use those IDs when boarding a commercial domestic flight.

The law was passed in 2005 and requires identification cards issued by states to meet standards such as anti-counterfeit technology set by the Department of Homeland Security. It was recommended in 2004 by the 9/11 Commission and has been implemented at military bases, federal facilities and nuclear power plants, according to the Department of Homeland Security.

The state Department of Finance & Administration has worked several years with Homeland Security to ensure its identification process is compliant with the law. Jake Bleed, DFA communications administrator, said DFA has followed a procedure that has earned it extensions along the way.

"We're at the point now where we no longer need extensions; the October deadline is merely the end of the most recent extension," he wrote in an email.

The state's ID cards are mostly compliant. The big change is the extended background checks required to be issued those IDs. Real IDs will feature a gold star. Noncompliant IDs will still be available and will indicate that the card does not meet Real ID standards.

Homeland Security has announced a deadline of Jan. 22, 2018, for REAL ID compliance. At that point, passengers in states that are not compliant and have not been granted an extension will need another form of identification to board a domestic flight. By Oct. 1, 2020, all air travelers will need a REAL ID-compliant license or another form of identification acceptable to the Transportation Security Administration.

Twenty-three states are compliant with the REAL ID Act, according to the Department of Homeland Security. Five states – Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico and Washington – along with American Samoa are noncompliant. The rest like Arkansas have extensions.

**[Link here](#)** for more enforcement and rules related to the REAL ID program.

There are opponents of the law. The Cato Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based libertarian group, has been critical of the law, even suggesting the federal government will never fully enforce REAL ID provisions. Jim Harper, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, **wrote in September 2015** that the Department of Homeland Security – through the TSA – will not stop people in 2016 from boarding planes if they don't have an updated ID.

“I am 100% certain they will not. Every state will be out of compliance for the entire year, and the TSA will not implement a policy of refusing travelers from non-compliant states,” wrote Harper, a founding member of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Data Privacy and Integrity Advisory Committee. “The reason for my confidence is a basic understanding of the politics involved. If TSA – perhaps the most despised U.S. federal agency in history – refuses people the right to travel because they do not carry a national ID, the uproar will be intense and lasting. The lawsuits that follow such an action will make their heads spin. And it will all be focused at the federal government: the TSA, the DHS, and the U.S. Congress with its flaccid oversight of the security bureaucracy.”

Other groups have said a REAL ID card will increase the chances for identification theft.