

## **The best security: Universal tracking devices**

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Following the September 11 attacks, and based on recommendations of the 911 Commission, the REAL ID Act became law in 2005. Since then, the federal government has been rolling back deadlines for implementation by states, compliance costs for the rollout running in the millions of dollars.

But costs were not the major concern. Several states resisted the measure, calling the card a national ID that risked compromising personal information more than securing anything. Some even passed laws declaring REAL ID cards illegal within their boundaries. The federal government then went after states, one by one, and, finally the last three holdouts, Maine, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina, were coerced into submission.

Senator Mike Folmer of Pennsylvania had noted the fourteen identifying features on the card would not have prevented the Oklahoma City bomber's act of terrorism. Maine's Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap said of the cards, "You might as well just repeal the Fourth Amendment." And the ACLU took the stance that the federal government should be affirming citizens' rights to come and go rather than intruding on them.

Like so many presentations at local government meetings, Bethea's didn't present pros and cons, even though some of the pros definitely raised questions and sounded alarms. As fascist as "national ID" sounds, the Cato Institute's Jim Harper has pointed out, these cards meet all the criteria: They're used for ID, they're nationally uniform, and they're legally or practically required.

Bethea said the state began issuing REAL ID cards in May last year, and they will be "required" for access to federal buildings, domestic commercial flights, military bases, nuclear facilities, and other federal buildings – as if people are scrambling to get into nuclear facilities. The cards will not be required to visit places like the post office or the VA hospital.

Then, Bethea said if somebody wanted to try to do any of the above without a REAL ID, they would have to call ahead of time to find out what they needed in the form of documentation, and they would have to call each time, for each facility, because the rules will be different and changing. Meanwhile, persons traveling with foreign passports will not be subject to the same requirements.

Bethea went over the documents a person will have to produce to get a REAL ID. A resident who already has a driver license, will need one official document proving his “identity, date of birth, legal presence/lawful status;” another document with his full name and Social Security number; and two documents verifying a current North Carolina address.

Documentation acceptable for a child includes correspondence from a sports team, proof of a magazine subscription, or a hunting or fishing license. Homeless people can get a letter from their shelter; if they’re couch-crashing in-between jobs, they just might not get to fly out of state to interview for that dream job. A list of required documents for different classes of people may be found at [ncrealid.gov](http://ncrealid.gov).

The yellow star verifies that all the information needed to establish a person’s residency is on file, stored in a database that would surely be a trophy for hackers. Those who say this is secure might remember the Pentagon, the Democratic National Committee, Sony, The New York Times, and NASA have all been hacked; and high-profile data bases are regularly breached.

It is uncertain whether the star is one of the REAL ID cards’ fourteen security features. Nobody is listing them in a FAQ. One feature is a barcode that could, conceivably, contain any information submitted, and which may be scanned as proof of age anytime somebody buys an alcoholic beverage. Another, the encoding of digital photographs by facial recognition software, has been a highlight of North Carolina licenses since 2004.

Information published by licensing agencies, like [ncdot.gov](http://ncdot.gov), expressly denies that any personal data will be shared. But Section 202(d)(12) of the enabling legislation requires states to provide all other states electronic access to their motor vehicle databases, and Section 202(d)(13) requires the state motor vehicle databases to at least contain data from all fields printed on state driver licenses. The title of Section 37.33 was even changed so it no longer reads, “Database Connectivity with Other States.”

“The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.” – The US Constitution