

[Are they still boarding planes? Tuesday was deadline for new 'Real ID' cards](#)

By [Joseph Boven](#) 12/7/09 12:39 PM



Is Real ID a really failed policy?

The Bush-era [Real ID Act of 2005](#) sought to impose standards for identification materials across the country. In most cases that meant seriously upgrading authentication and issuance procedures. It meant state drivers licenses had to pass muster with Homeland Security. The upgrades would be expensive. Colorado balked, like 24 other states, which should have meant that a Colorado license wouldn't get you through airport security or into federal buildings. States applied for extensions. Then Obama was elected and he appointed new Homeland Security officials. Real ID, however, continues for now, and the feds are at least technically still trying to implement it. Tuesday was the last day for states to file another waiver. Colorado made it, but [eight states failed to do so](#), as if airports weren't already enough of a nightmare.



In the GOP-dominated post-Sept 11-era, the Real ID Act was touted as must-pass security legislation. Democratic detractors were kept out hearings where the Act was discussed. The Act was supposed to go into effect 11 May 2008. The next deadline comes on the first of the year 2010.

But the lawmakers backing Real ID asked the strapped states to foot the bill for its implementation. That didn't go over very well. State lawmakers referred to it as an "unfunded mandate," lawmaker shorthand for "not going to happen." The bill also drew sharp protest from a wide spectrum of activist rights groups, including the CATO Institute and the ACLU.

The Colorado General Assembly [passed a resolution \(pdf\)](#) that asked Congress to repeal the Act.

Obama [Homeland Security Chief Jane Napolitano](#) has said she supports an alternative ID act, the so-called Pass ID Act, which would repeal Real ID and replace it with a bill that would limit technological burdens while still implementing federal standards for state identification.

A spokesperson for the Department of Homeland Security told Real Congress, a project of the National Journal, that "Should Congress not act before it adjourns this year, DHS has planned for contingencies related to REAL ID implementation, including extending the deadline as a last resort."

Happy holiday travel, America!

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