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PASS ID just REAL ID pig in lipstick

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REAL ID: stricken but still kickin'

Few people seem to be aware that PASS ID is a near-clone of REAL ID just waiting to be sprung on us. Some background:

REAL ID, the federal government's attempt to turn every state's drivers license into a homogenized national ID card, may not quite be dead yet but it seems to be on its back with legs kicking.

The REAL ID Act, a Bush-era "anti-terrorism" initiative, mandated that all states adopt a single national standard for identifying and authenticating people through state-of-the-art driver's licenses that incorporated a photo, embedded electronic data, and "biometric identifiers."

As Computerworld reported Monday ([Real ID program in deep trouble](#)), a recent decision by lawmakers on Capitol Hill "slashed REAL ID funding by 40%, from \$100 million to \$60 million" when they passed the \$43 billion Department of Homeland Security budget for 2010.

The article quoted Jim Harper of the libertarian [Cato Institute](#) who observed, "There isn't any love for REAL ID on Capitol Hill." But lawmakers put it on life support instead of pulling the plug because most of them see the concept as a security measure and don't want to kill it off completely for fear of being seen as "too soft on national security."

While government powercrats eager to document and control people's movements, and major politically-connected electronic corporations that stood to make hundreds of millions of dollars from the scheme eagerly supported REAL ID, many others were vehemently opposed to it.

Many states rejected REAL ID as an unfunded

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federal mandate and refused to participate (although libertarians figured they just didn't want to use state funds but would have eagerly sucked up federal taxbucks.)

Privacy advocates accused the government of creating a de facto national ID card that evoked images of Nazi Germany or Communist Eastern European authorities stopping people on the streets and demanding to see their "papers."

Tech savvy geeks from around the world repeatedly demonstrated how every generation of "state-of-the-art" high security card can easily be hacked, cracked, and their RFID signals hijacked, typically by using simple off-the-shelf electronic equipment, thereby turning the supposedly "secure" digital cards into easy pickings for ID thieves.

And libertarians of every stripe rejected REAL ID on principle as an open government attack on civil liberties and individual freedoms.



Political hypocrisy in action: [CNSNews reports](#) that DHL chief Janet Napolitano supports weakening REAL ID but simultaneously supports implementing

Since Janet Napolitano, current DHS Secretary, rejected REAL ID when she was governor of Arizona she will likely find it hard to impose it on states now.

Pam Dixon of [World Privacy Forum](#) notes, "For all intents and purposes, REAL ID has been put on the back burner." Then she warns, "But it isn't dead yet."

Not only is REAL ID not dead yet, but Congress seems to have birthed a bigger, uglier brother named PASS ID, which is waiting in the wings for the right time to be sprung on a largely unsuspecting populace.

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The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) branded the REAL ID clone as a "cosmetic makeover" in their article, [PASS ID: REAL ID Reanimated](#).

EFF reports, "The PASS ID Act seeks to make many of the same ineffectual, dangerous changes the REAL ID Act attempted to impose."

PASS ID appears to be little more than a REAL ID pig in lipstick.

Libertarians, privacy advocates, civil rights groups, and liberty lovers in general will now have to coalesce around the new threat.



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