

Senate holds hearings on Identification Security as REAL ID vs. PASS ID debate heats up

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Yesterday morning the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs held a hearing in order to discuss the REAL ID Act of 2005, as well as a revised bill called Providing Additional Security in States Identification Act (PASS ID), which would reform REAL ID in an attempt to make it work with less strain on state governments. In addition to the opening remarks by the members of the committee, Secretary of DHS, Janet Napolitano and Vermont Governor Jim Douglas each gave their testimony as part of the first of two panels. The second panel included Stewart Baker, former assistant secretary of DHS, Leroy Baca, Los Angeles County Sheriff, David Quam, Director of Federal Relations from the National Governors Association (NGA) and Ari Schwartz, VP and CEO from the Center for Democracy and Technology.

Secretary Napolitano expressed her concern with the current REAL ID Act, but does support the revised PASS ID, as a way to increase the security surrounding the issuance of driver's licenses without putting added financial burdens on state governments. According to Napolitano, nationwide license standards are essential because of the gap in ID production across the country.

The PASS ID Act is sponsored by six senators and had some collaboration from the NGA, which seems to show a bit more bipartisanship and buy in from more states. PASS ID would remove some of the portions and requirements from **REAL ID** that were the most contentious, such as inflexible electronic document verification, high costs to the states and re-enrollment systems.

Governor Jim Douglas and NGA Director David Quam both provided testimony that advocates the passing and future implementation of PASS ID. The PASS ID Act was created and built around many of the concerns of the states, while REAL ID did not seem to provide the same open forum. Additionally, PASS ID still would provide the added security measures that REAL ID sought to establish, while allowing the system to be less intrusive and easier to implement at the [state level](#).

While yesterday's testimony is only the beginning of the debate on PASS ID versus its predecessor, **REAL ID**, it was a much needed forum to facilitate the discussion of what PASS ID is and enable the public to understand the need for a more secure driver's license system. If PASS ID passes during this year, vendors will need to be aware of the differences to REAL ID and how they can assist states and make the transition as smooth as possible.