

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 9, 2014

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Johnson:

As members of the California Congressional Delegation, we urge you to take a critical step that will help ensure the successful implementation of California's new driver's license law (AB 60). The law provides access to a license for all eligible drivers, in a manner consistent with the REAL ID Act of 2005. It will improve public safety in our populous state by ensuring that all Californians understand the rules of the road, and can be trained, tested, licensed, and insured. The law takes effect in January 2015, and California is actively preparing for its implementation. We ask that you accept, as consistent with REAL ID, California's proposed design for licenses to be issued to state residents who cannot show proof of citizenship or authorized presence.

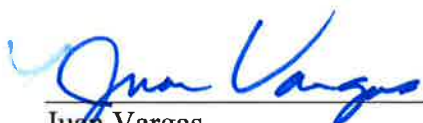
Immigrants are primary targets for scams, discrimination, retaliation, and extortion in encounters with a diverse set of unscrupulous actors. As you know, our state is home to a higher population of unauthorized immigrants than any other state – approximately 2.8 million - and we have a great interest in protecting this vulnerable population from bad actors and criminals that thrive by exploiting others.

Governor Brown and California legislators worked together to ensure that the driver's licenses issued under AB 60 would be in compliance with the REAL ID Act of 2005. In crafting the legislation, they struck a fine balance that complies with the federal law and protects community members from discrimination by anyone who may see the license, such as landlords, grocery store clerks, or other non-governmental actors.

We recently learned that your agency did not approve the license design specified in AB 60 because, although the licenses will include a distinctive indicator on the front, the statement "NOT FOR OFFICIAL FEDERAL PURPOSES" will appear on the back of the card. We strongly believe that the design submitted by California satisfies the intent of the law, by including a distinctive mark on the front, and the required statement on the surface of the license. DHS has taken a flexible and pragmatic approach to promoting state compliance with the many provisions of REAL ID. At 38 million residents, California has the highest population in the country, and we expect that up to 1.5 million community members will apply for the new driver's licenses. Taking into account the large number of individuals who will have these licenses, it should not be difficult to train federal officials to recognize the distinctive marks on the California licenses. We urge DHS to work in partnership with California and approve this design.

Given the push back on the REAL ID Act of 2005, with many states passing laws rejecting or forbidding its implementation, deeming California compliant with the law could move REAL ID implementation efforts ahead significantly. California legislators worked closely with our state agencies to craft legislation that meets the requirements of the federal law and protects our residents to the maximum degree possible. We encourage you to exercise flexibility in implementing the law, and approve the design proposed in AB 60, to help California enhance public safety on its roads and highways.

Sincerely,



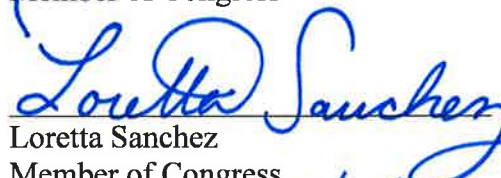
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Xavier Becerra
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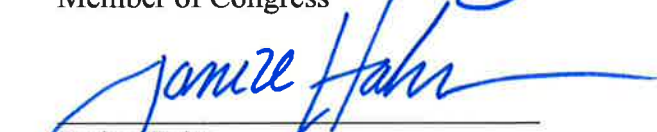
Lucille Roybal-Allard
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Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress



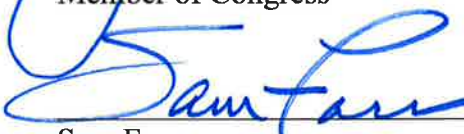
Judy Chu
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Mike Honda
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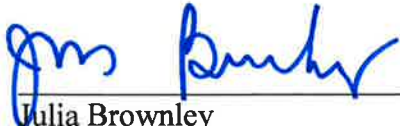
Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
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Gloria Negrete McLeod
Member of Congress



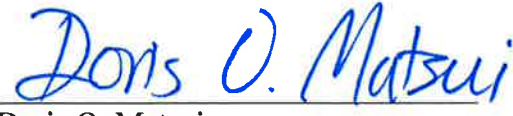
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