

## **I'M DRIVING LICENSES, SAYS ELIOT**

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### **Body**

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ALBANY - Gov. Spitzer now concedes parts of his revamped driver's license plan need legislative approval - but maintains lawmakers have no say on whether illegal immigrants should be allowed to get them, a spokeswoman said.

Spitzer significantly revised his driver's license plan last month by bowing to federal pressure to embrace a high-tech national identity card, known as Real ID, that provides more secure licenses for citizens and legal immigrants.

Because drivers would have to pay more for the higher-security licenses, legislative approval is needed, said Spitzer spokeswoman Jennifer Givner.

But the cost of the no-frills license - \$100 for first-timers and \$50 for those seeking to renew - would be the same as New York's current driver's license.

With statewide polls showing more than 70% of New Yorkers are opposed to letting illegal immigrants get licenses, several lawmakers said there is no way the Legislature would agree to it.

Spitzer doesn't plan to give lawmakers that chance.

"We have no intention of doing that," Givner said.

GOP state senators disputed the idea that Spitzer can unilaterally impose his plan to give illegal immigrants driver's licenses next year.

"He is going to have to deal with us one way or another," said state Sen. Martin Golden (R-Brooklyn). Golden said the Legislature could block funding that Spitzer wants the Department of Motor Vehicles to use to examine documents presented by illegal immigrants.

Spitzer administration officials said privately that the governor is banking on the public turning its wrath on Senate Republicans if they opt to block the more secure licenses that U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff is encouraging all states to adopt.

A Spitzer ally on most fronts, Sen. Diane Savino (D-S.I.), said the best way for the governor to help his cause now is to take the plan off the top of his agenda and shift to other issues.

"He may have the best idea in the world, but it's just not the best time," she said.

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