

## **Illegal immigrants issued ID cards; Some cities and states go against national trend**

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### **Body**

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**Illegal immigrants** are getting driver's licenses and identification **cards** in **cities** and **states** that are bucking the **national trend** to take official documents and public benefits away from them.

New Haven, Conn., began **issuing** municipal **ID cards** in July to all residents, including **illegal immigrants**. New York will join eight other **states** in giving driver's licenses to **illegal immigrants**, starting in December.

Gov. Eliot Spitzer "believes it's important to bring a significant population in New York **state** out of the shadows ... (and) allow them to participate in the economy," Motor Vehicles Commissioner David Swarts says.

"It is totally contrary to the **trend** in most other **states**," says Oklahoma **state** Rep. Randy Terrill, author of a new law that denies **illegal immigrants** any government **ID**. It takes effect next month.

"There are huge security concerns when it comes to somebody who is a foreign **national** in this country possessing official, government-**issued** **ID**," he says.

Swarts counters that safety will improve because **illegal immigrants** will purchase car insurance and hit-and-run accidents will decrease.

New Haven has **issued** 3,700 municipal **IDs**. The **card** can be used to open a bank account, as a library **card** and as a debit **card** at some stores. As many as 15,000 **illegal immigrants** live in the **city**.

Laura Perez, 28, opened a checking account with her **card**. An **illegal immigrant** from Guatemala, Perez used to keep her money under her pillow. "I feel safe now," she says. "If we are working so hard, if we are paying our taxes, the **cards** are a fair thing."

Tom Fitton, president of the conservative Judicial Watch, says the **cards** "raise the specter of local governments conspiring with illegals to help them stay here."

"In the least, they undermine federal law," he says, "and at worst, they violate the law."

Action pending elsewhere . . .

Lawmakers are considering municipal **ID cards**:

\*San Francisco Supervisor Tom Ammiano introduced legislation last month to create a **city ID card**. "We can't say, 'You can come to my house and clean my toilet, but then you have no right to civic participation,'" he says.

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\*New York **City** Councilman Hiram Monserrate introduced a measure in July to create **city ID cards**, aide Wayne Mahlke says.

\*Bruno Barreiro, chairman of the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners, says he is drafting an ordinance for county **IDs**.

\*Ashok Kumar, a supervisor in Dane County, Wis., plans to introduce a measure this month.

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