

## **BILL BANS DRIVER LICENSES FOR 'ILLEGALS'**

### **IF IT BECOMES LAW, PROOF OF LEGAL IMMIGRATION STATUS WILL BE NEEDED**

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#### **Body**

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MILWAUKEE -- Immigrants would have to provide **proof** they are in the United States legally to get a Wisconsin **driver's license** under legislation proposed Monday.

The **bill**, authored by Rep. Mark Gundrum, R-New Berlin, also would tie the expiration date of the state-issued ID to that of the foreign citizen's visa.

The legislation aims at preventing terrorist attacks and making Wisconsin and the country "a little more secure," Gundrum said Monday at a news conference at Milwaukee's Mitchell International Airport.

He said the 19 hijackers involved in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks had 63 **driver's licenses** among them.

"We don't want to end up being the cause or the contributor of one of the great tragedies of this nation," Gundrum said.

Wisconsin is one of 10 states that do not require **proof** of **legal immigration status** for the issuance of **driver's licenses**.

Last week, the U.S House approved legislation authored by Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, R-Wis., to make states verify they are not giving **driver's licenses** to illegal immigrants. Federal agencies would not accept **driver's licenses** issued by states that do not meet the proposed requirement.

The federal **bill** still **needs** approval from the U.S. Senate and President Bush's signature to **become law**.

Sensenbrenner, who also attended Monday's news conference, called Wisconsin a "Mecca for illegal aliens" to get **driver's licenses**. He said illegal immigrants in Illinois are rushing to Wisconsin to get **driver's licenses** because of the states' difference in the process.

The other states similar to Wisconsin in this aspect are Hawaii, Maryland, Michigan, Montana, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Utah and Washington.

State Democratic Rep. Pedro Colon, who represents a Milwaukee district with a large immigrant population, said Gundrum's proposal is "presuming most **law**-abiding immigrants are terrorists" and **will** not help make Wisconsin safer.

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He also said federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, should enforce the immigration law, not the state of Wisconsin.

"What they're doing is to create a huge burden where it doesn't belong," he said. "It's like, say, we are going to give the mission in Iraq to the local police department. We can't turn Wisconsin into a police state, where everywhere you go someone's checking your immigration status."

Gundrum, chairman of the Assembly's Judiciary Committee, said he does not know how much it would cost Wisconsin to implement a law like his proposal. His legislation needs the Legislature's approval and Gov. Jim Doyle's signature to become law.

Doyle does not support the proposal partly over concerns about cost, spokeswoman Melanie Fonder said. She said Sensenbrenner's legislation itself is expected to cost Wisconsin \$1.3 million if it becomes law. But she did not say whether the governor would veto Gundrum's bill if it gets legislative approval.

Sensenbrenner said if his proposal becomes federal law and Gundrum's proposal fails at the state level, Wisconsin driver's licenses will not be accepted for federal purposes, such as boarding an airplane or entering a federal building. The bill in Congress also requires states to share driver's license data so someone cannot get multiple licenses from different states.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates the federal legislation would cost more than \$100 million to implement, but Sensenbrenner refuted that number.

About 7 million illegal immigrants lived in the United States in 2000 and 41,000 of them lived in Wisconsin, according to the latest estimates by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Wisconsin does not track the number of immigrants -- legal or illegal -- who have licenses because the state does not ask for that information, according to the state Department of Transportation's Division of Motor Vehicles.

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