

Bill for New York City ID Card To Be Introduced by Councilman

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Body

Identification **cards** would be made available to all **New York City** residents -- including tens of thousands of illegal immigrants -- under a proposal by a **City** Council member from Queens who was inspired by a pioneering program that begins in **New** Haven today.

"I would hope that the federal government would not retaliate against the **city** of **New York** if we provided for a municipal identification **card**," the council member, Hiram Monserrate, said yesterday, referring to a federal immigration raid in **New** Haven last month two days after that **city** approved the issuance of municipal **cards**.

"The **city** of **New York** is home to eight million people, many of them immigrants and some of them, frankly, undocumented," said Mr. Monserrate, who plans to **introduce** legislation tomorrow to create the **ID card**. "Some of them have been residents of the **city** for many years, and to give them a basic **ID card** that's valid within the **city** limits only makes sense for our municipality."

Mr. Monserrate, a **New York**-born former **city** police officer who represents one of the **city**'s most diverse districts, called the legislation a first step.

Christine C. Quinn, the Council speaker, would not comment on its chances for success in the 51-member Council, a spokeswoman said, adding that the **bill** would be referred to committee for a full review.

In **New** Haven, a **city** of 125,000, the Board of Aldermen overwhelmingly approved the plan to offer the **cards**, which can be used by immigrants to open bank accounts as well as to gain access to municipal services.

So that the **card**, known as the Elm **City** Resident **Card**, would not become a "scarlet letter" for illegal immigrants, it was designed to appeal to all residents by combining access to pools, libraries and the municipal golf course, and doubling as a parking debit **card**.

But critics argue that it will entice illegal immigration and undermine border security.

For many **city** residents, the only state or local government identification now available is a driver's license or a nondriver **ID card**. For both, the State Department of Motor Vehicles requires a Social Security **card** and other documents that prove legal presence in the country.

A municipal **ID** could encourage immigrants to report crimes to police, Mr. Monserrate said, as well as to request services.

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