

The 2005 California Driver's License Bill

Senator Gilbert A. Cedillo to introduce new driver's license bill in California.

([PRWEB](#)) November 8, 2004 -- The next session of the California Legislature is slated to begin in early January and Senator Gilbert A. Cedillo, author of The Immigrant Responsibility and Security Act, will again introduce driver's license legislation. It is almost a year ago that Senator Cedillo and Governor Schwarzenegger sat down in the governor's Santa Monica office to repeal the Davis era license bill and agreed in principle of the provisions of the 2004 version's licenses for the entire undocumented community, no discriminatory mark on licenses, and the governor's securing of a two-thirds vote to make it become law immediately upon his signature. More importantly, the governor showed a sincere sensitivity to the immigrant community and a heartfelt willingness to honor his word and keep this commitment. His veto message last September, both in what it said and did not say, did neither.

“One of the most important duties of the Governor of a state is to protect its citizens,” said Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in his prepared veto message. “Determining the true identity and history of an individual is a key component of that protection. This bill does not adequately address the security concerns that my Department of Homeland Security and I have and I cannot support it.”

It is still not clear what the governor wants because he has failed to provide a driver's license bill proposal something Senator Cedillo provided back in April and his position continues to change. His best suggestion made only verbally is to place a discriminatory mark on driver's licenses because of his concern for the use of matriculas. Michael Gardner writes in the San Diego Union-Tribune today that “Schwarzenegger said an easily-identifiable license is important to ensure that fraudulent licenses are not used to open bank accounts or board planes.” What the governor does not realize is that immigrants can already open bank accounts at places like Wells Fargo and Bank of America and board planes with airlines like Delta and Southwest without a driver's license; they only need a matricula.

Below is an excerpt from the governor's press conference yesterday:

Question. “Will you sign a bill for a driver's license that included a mark on the license?”

Answer. “What does he [the Speaker] mean about a mark? What type of mark is he [the Speaker] talking about? I have been very clear that the license has to be a different color and look different. It doesn't have to say “illegal, undocumented or immigrant.” It has to look different. They have said that they have solved all the problems in looking in to the background checks, but how? First, you have to establish who are the people who want a driver's license? Any one can get a license with a different name so what does the background check really mean? Fifty percent of the matricula consular are fake. It doesn't say if the person was born in Mexico or Guatemala or wherever. There is no consistency. They did not address those issues. I want to know what mark they mean. It has to be a different color. I want people to see it the license of and undoc before it gets out of their pocket. So everyone seeing it knows they are undocumented and it can not be used for banks and voting and all that stuff. I am concerned that the roads are safe and that people can drive safely. It must be used for only what is intended for, to drive a vehicle.”

Despite recent indications from Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez, D-Los Angeles, that he is willing to accept a mark to match the governor's stated intentions to do a driver's license bill, Senator Cedillo takes a more



guarded approach.

“I remain ready, willing, and able to negotiate with the governor and exchange proposals in writing,” said Senator Cedillo. “Until he begins this exchange—a sure indication to me that he wants to resolve the matter, I remain unwilling to accept a discriminatory mark. I hold this position because I share the view of Cardinal Roger Mahony who sent a letter to the governor condemning such a suggestion, share the sensitivity of the Jewish community who also sent a letter to him condemning such an idea, and share the values of Los Angeles Police Chief Bill Bratton who not only deemed such a notion discriminatory and inappropriate on its face, but also that a mark on driver’s licenses served no public safety value.

“People should remember that back in August at the Republican Party Convention, Governor Schwarzenegger said that leadership is about doing the right thing. The right thing to do is create a driver’s license bill that strengthens national security and public safety while holding immigrants to the highest level of responsibility in the nation. I will give the governor another opportunity to do the right thing and exercise national leadership on the driver’s license issue. And I’ll be back every year and every session until the governor keeps his word and honors his commitment.”

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