HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 1154

TESTIMONY

PRESENTED BY

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BUREAU OF DRIVER LICENSING
PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Good morning. My name is Rebecca Bickley and I am the Director of the Bureau of Driver Licensing in the Department of Transportation. I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Judiciary Committee regarding the municipal police photo identification card system as provided in House Bill 1154.

We recognize and appreciate the need for a photo identification card system for our municipal police and municipal authority security officers. The safety of the citizens of the Commonwealth is of primary importance, and the Department of Transportation will to do whatever it can to assist with this endeavor.

While we recognize the importance of this program and want to provide assistance in its implementation, we have concerns about the legislation, as it is currently written. The process that is defined by this bill is incompatible with our highly automated license issuance system. Please bear with me as I explain the process currently utilized by the Bureau of Driver Licensing when an individual applies for a Pennsylvania Identification Card.

A customer visits a local Driver License Center to apply for an identification card. The applicant is required to present proof of identity to the Driver License Examiner before the Examiner completes the necessary application form for the photo identification card. The information found on your Driver's License is data entered into our large, complex, mainframe Driver License System data base. The data we capture includes: name, address, date of birth, sex, height, and eye color. The expiration dates and identification numbers are automatically assigned to the applicant by the computer. The format for the ID card number is already programmed within the computer. The computer also automatically computes fees and establishes any other relevant requirements for the customer's record. All of this involves very little data entry because of the sophistication of the mainframe computer system. However, it also reflects a complex mainframe computer system that is very difficult to adapt to other types of cards and other program needs.

When data entry is complete, the computer produces a camera card which has a two dimensional bar code containing all of the information for the identification card issuance. When you renew your driver's

license or photo ID card you also receive a camera card which you then take to the Photo License Center.

When the customer takes their camera card to the Photo License Center to have their picture taken, the photo technician scans the two dimensional bar code to capture all the data that will be printed on the identification card. The Photo License Center equipment does not capture the customer data and can only read the already encrypted data in the bar code. The customer signs their name on a digitized signature pad and the technician then takes the person's picture. The customer's signature and image are retained on our centralized imaging data base. The identification card is produced three to four minutes later.

These are several of the key components of this process. Please note that the photo technicians are not trained in data entry and our 144 photo stations cannot generate an ID card without an encrypted bar code on a camera card.

I felt it was important to take you through the photo identification card process in Pennsylvania so you can better understand our concerns with the municipal police identification card process, as outlined in the current version of HB 1154.

The process, as presented in the proposed legislation, is not compatible with the highly computerized Driver License photo identification program. For example, the proposed legislation requires that the data elements for the registry data base be captured after the photo identification card is produced. We cannot produce a photo identification card unless the data entry has been completed and a camera card has been produced. The legislation, while not specific, infers that the photo technician would enter the data to be captured on the card. Once again, our 372 photo technicians are not skilled in data entry and our image capture stations cannot produce ID cards via a data entry process. In addition, the information that is included on the card would probably be inconsistent with the data elements on our driver license system.

If we are to pursue issuance of uniform photo identification cards via PennDOT, we should develop a process that is compatible with the technologically sophisticated systems we operate. The Commission could establish the officer's identity on the centralized registry and issue a camera card to the officer. The officer could then have their picture taken. Development and installment of the software for the photo stations alone would cost approximately $75,000. If, on the other hand, PennDOT were required to complete the data entry on its mainframe computer system to generate the camera card , the cost of just developing a mainframe system to support this program would approach $500,000. In addition, this would create additional personnel costs and costs for supplies. In either case, there will be additional costs for photo technician time.

Please note that the Department of Transportation participation in this program must be funded through the General Fund because the Pennsylvania Constitution prohibits Motor License Funds from being utilized for programs other than those associated with the construction and maintenance of the Commonwealth's highways and bridges, and for highway safety. Therefore, all system development, personnel and

other costs must be tracked and charged to a special General Fund appropriation. Any administrative overhead associated with this tracking must also be funded.

Another issue that we must address if PennDOT participates in this program is the critical issue of service to our driver licensing customers. The public will not tolerate long lines at photo centers, and adding more than 22,000 customers to photo centers in a relatively compressed timeframe would have an adverse impact on customer wait times. One of our greatest challenges as licensing administrators is maintaining acceptable service in our very busy metropolitan photo centers. Unfortunately, the greatest demand for the municipal police officer IDs would be at our metropolitan sites. The legislation also addresses IDs for an unspecified number of municipal security guards, and we assume that many of these individuals work in busy metropolitan areas. Therefore, we recommend that municipal photos for police officers and security guards only be taken after 4:30 PM or on Sundays to avoid exacerbating the long lines we are currently trying to address. This would also help us track the personnel costs associated with the program.

Our other concern with the legislation, as it is currently written, is with security of the municipal police ID card and the data associated with its issuance. Using PennDOT's systems will result in very sensitive data being retained regarding law enforcement officers and their place of employment. We are concerned about potential security breeches for officers who may, in the future become undercover officers. Our imaging data base is on-line at 43 locations throughout the state. Our mainframe system is on-line at hundreds of locations, including other agencies and at over 40 private businesses.

An alternative to PennDOT issuance of the photo identification card is a technology transfer partnership between PennDOT and the Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission. If the Commission were to contract with our digitized photo license vendor for stand-alone issuance stations in each county, the cost of administering the program might be reduced. In light of our experience with this type of technology, we could proactively support the development of a unique issuance system as a component of the centralized registry. Development of a single, centralized registry that

also supports the ID issuance would also address any information and photo security concerns.

Once again, we remain committed to supporting the efforts of the Commission in establishing a uniform identification card, either as an issuing agent of the card or as a development support partner. However, the process delineated in HB 1154 should be modified to provide for a viable and efficient issuance system that can utilize existing and emerging technologies.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.