Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 5, 2015

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary, Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue Complex, NW
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Johnson:

We are writing to you in support of the Louisiana State Police's request for a compliance deadline extension regarding new requirements under the REAL ID Act of 2005. As you know, this law was enacted as part of the 9/11 Commission's recommendations. The Act sets standards for state-issued driver's licenses and other official identification documents that would make it easier for law enforcement to verify the identity of the holder. However, it has become apparent to the Louisiana State Police that the State of Louisiana will not be fully compliant in time for the October 10, 2015 deadline, when REAL ID-valid identification will become necessary for entry into federal facilities.

In 2008, the State of Louisiana passed House Bill 715 barring implementation of the REAL ID Act because many within the state legislature had concerns about identity and privacy issues. Since 2008, however, many of those concerns have been resolved. In 2014, the state legislature passed a separate bill, House Bill 907, that would have allowed the issuance of REAL ID compliant driver's licenses and special identification cards. The current Governor has since vetoed this legislation.

Col. Michael Edmonson, State Police Superintendent, assures us that since 2014, Louisiana's Office of Motor Vehicles has revised several agency regulations and policies towards compliance with REAL ID standards and they have met almost all the necessary requirements for REAL ID. We trust that the state wants to continue to work with the Department of Homeland Security to ensure that Louisiana driver's licenses and special IDs will still offer the requisite information that protects our national security.

With this in mind, we ask you to please grant an exception and extend the REAL ID implementation deadline for the State of Louisiana. We echo the State Police request for DHS to continue to accept Louisiana driver's licenses and state IDs for entrance into federal facilities beyond the October 10, 2015 implementation date. Additionally, we also ask that you apply any extensions towards airline travel for our citizens for as long as is necessary for us to become entirely REAL ID compliant. If you have any questions for us, please feel free to contact us at any time.

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

Sincerely,

DAVID VITTER
United States Senator

BILL CASSIDY, M.D.
United States Senator

CHARLES W. BOUSTANY, JR., M.D.
United States Representative

CEDRIC L. RICHMOND
United States Representative

RALPH ABRAHAM, M.D.
United States Representative

GARRET GRAVES
United States Representative