



MISSOURI SENATE

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Senate Approves Sen. Griesheimer's Bill Waiving Lawful-Presence Requirements for Senior Citizens

JEFFERSON CITY— The Missouri Senate this week passed legislation sponsored by Sen. John Griesheimer, R-Washington, to help senior citizens who are having difficulty providing proof of lawful presence when renewing their driver's licenses.

The lawful-presence requirement is part of the Show-Me Proof program, which went into effect this past July in accordance with a federal mandate issued following the 9/11 attacks. The new law was intended to ensure that everyone with a state-issued ID card has a legal reason to be in the United States. To substantiate lawful presence, Missouri citizens must show their birth certificates.

“Overall, the Show-Me Proof law is a good law, mostly because it will stop potential terrorists from obtaining state-issued IDs to further their anti-American causes,” Griesheimer said. “But the lawful-presence requirement has unintentionally made the renewal process a mess for law-abiding senior citizens, and it has also been draining on the Department of Revenue and the Department of Health’s Division of Vital Records.”

Griesheimer said many of his constituents do not have birth certificates because they were born in other states, or a birth certificate was never issued because they were born at home or before birth certificates were established. If they do have one, many are laced with inaccuracies, which bog down the license-renewal process even more.

Senate Bill 1001 exempts Missouri citizens who are currently 65 or older from having to show a birth certificate when renewing their driver's license. Under the legislation, they would be able to use a previously issued Missouri driver's license, instruction permit or non-driver's license as proof of lawful presence.

“This will prevent honest senior citizens, such as the World War II veterans, from being treated like possible terrorists at the license-renewal counter,” Griesheimer said. “I drafted this bill because I don't think Missouri should wait around for the federal government to figure out how to address this issue.”

The bill, which is now being considered in the House, has an emergency clause so once it receives final passage from the Legislature, it will go into effect immediately.

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