



For Immediate Release
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Contact: Rep. William Straus
(617) 722-2080

Registry of Motor Vehicles Implements Straus Amendment on Privacy

State Representative Bill Straus (D-Mattapoisett) announced today that beginning in October the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) will no longer allow drivers who renew their licenses online to use their social security number as their license number. This effort by the RMV is intended to protect drivers from the growing problem of identity theft and is being undertaken as a result of language inserted in the Fiscal Year '05 budget by Rep. Straus.

“Currently, a large number of Massachusetts drivers use their social security number as a license number. This is a risky practice because a social security number is so closely tied to important personal information, which in the wrong hands can be used to commit fraud,” said Straus.

Once the change is implemented in October, drivers who renew their licenses online will be assigned a random “S” number as a license number. Drivers who wish to continue to use their social security number will be required to renew at a full-service RMV location.

Rep. Straus has been a leader in the Legislature in the area of consumer privacy. He was the original sponsor and proponent of successful legislation establishing the Massachusetts “Do Not Call” list limiting telemarketers. He has lobbied to protect the social security numbers of Massachusetts citizens in order to reduce their chances of becoming victims of identity theft. In addition to driver’s licenses, Rep. Straus has worked to keep social security numbers off of college identification cards and insurance cards.

“Identity theft can be devastating and take years to recover from. By limiting the use of social security numbers, I’m hopeful that we can reduce the chances of Massachusetts residents becoming victims of this fraud,” concluded Straus.