

Concerns with Digital Drivers' Licenses HF 4293 (Nelson/Hornstein)

HF 4293 (State Government and Transportation omnibus bill) requires a report on the feasibility of transitioning Minnesota to digital driver's licenses – **lines 238.3 through 238.16**. The language comes from Rep. Petersburg's bill **HF 4258**, which never had a hearing. Proponents of the bill state that because this is just a report, there is no reason to be concerned. However, we strongly disagree and believe that this door to digital drivers' licenses should not be opened.

Five Concerns with Digital Drivers' Licenses:

1. **Digital IDs give the government access to track citizens.** Digital IDs have the potential to be used by the government to monitor and control citizens. China's social credit score is an example of how a government monitors citizens, imposing restrictions through digital identification and tracking. Throughout the Covid pandemic, our government did not hesitate to try to implement a tracing system. Imagine what contact tracing would have looked like with a digital ID that could be accessed by the government.
2. **Digital IDs are the antithesis of freedom.** The authentication mechanisms of a digital ID would generate an entry in the audit log each time a person used the ID, such as to buy alcohol, get admitted to a hospital, pick up prescriptions, board a plane, rent a car, and more. It would create the potential for a "no card, no care" system. It would also cause insecurity. After completing the first phase of its digital driver's license project, Iowa reported that one "benefit" was the ability to suspend or revoke a person's license at any time. In the case of mistaken revocations, corrections would take time and effort.
3. **Digital IDs invade privacy.** Phone applications already collect data on the user – a digital ID could allow government access to personal data. Unbeknownst to citizens, digital identification could give the government a gold mine of private data. For example: location, phone usage, searches, contacts, passwords and more are all stored on phones.
4. **Digital IDs pose future risks.** Any attempt to 'protect privacy' while creating a digital ID is not compelling nor would it be permanent. In Pennsylvania, police officers praised digital drivers' licenses because it gave them the ability to "wirelessly pull up a driver's identification without having to leave their patrol cars." An embedded government system on an individual's private phone could lead to increasingly intrusive tracking and profiling should a future government or agency choose to do so.
5. **Digital IDs will marginalize Minnesotans.** A digital driver's license will require access to current and capable technology. Young drivers, the elderly, people in poverty could all be discriminated against through digital driver's licenses and restriction of access because they are not able to comply with the new system or afford the necessary updates.