

# House of Cards

**By Reg P. Wydeven  
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A few months back, my buddies Tree and Ducker and I went to the movie 'Super Bad.' The film chronicles the night of three high-schoolers trying to have a romantic encounter before graduation. They think they'll increase their chances by procuring some alcohol.

To do so, one of the boys obtains a fake drivers license. His friends fear it won't work as the Hawaii license reflects the boy is 25 and his name is "McLovin." Against all odds, 'McLovin' came through and got some beer. Thanks to a new plan issued by the Department of Homeland Security, however, high-schoolers shouldn't get their hopes up about becoming the next McLovin.

In response to recommendations made by the 9/11 commission to root out potential terrorists, the DHS unveiled the REAL ID program, which standardizes drivers license rules and procedures throughout all 50 states. The program requires states to demand certain standards for individuals obtaining drivers licenses, including proof of citizenship and residency, instead of the typical date of birth and social security number.

States will also have to cooperate to prevent applicants from obtaining multiple licenses and add security features into the license design in order to help stop counterfeiting. Before the end of 2014, the use of these REAL IDs will be required to board commercial airline flights, access federal facilities and enter nuclear power plants. In May of 2005, Congress also passed REAL ID legislation.

DHS has set a start date of May 11, 2008, and requires states to have upgraded license security and implement a system to verify the lawful status of all license applicants by December 31, 2009. By December 1, 2014, individuals born after Dec. 1, 1964, or those age 50 and under, will need a REAL ID-compliant license by Dec. 1, 2014. The program extends the deadline by three years for those individuals over age 50. Residents of those states that fail to meet these deadlines will be required to supply a passport in order to fly or enter federal buildings.

The REAL ID program came on the heels of the findings of the 9/11 commission that uncovered the 19 hijackers possessed a combined 364 aliases, and 18 of them had some form of fake identification, including 17 with phony or illegally obtained drivers licenses.

Stopping the terrorists and McLovins of the world comes at a price, however. DHS is making approximately \$360 million in grant money available to assist states with the implementation of the new guidelines, but states will need to come up with the remaining \$3.9 billion price tag. Original projections had the cost at \$14.6 billion. DHS officials believe that the REAL ID program will result in an \$8 increase per license.

In the face of such a daunting expense, 21 states already oppose the program, with six states that "expressly prohibit compliance with REAL ID by statute." Opponents of the program also claim that it's Super Bad because the huge databases created by the program run the risk of being hacked into for identity theft purposes. It may also double the time spent at the DMV to get a license because of the increased documentation requirements.

It's a safe bet no one is going to be McLovin spending more time at the DMV.