



U.S. and Canadian Legislators Seek Border Security and Economic Viability

Leaders Concerned About Proposed Federal Passport Rule

Northeastern state and Eastern Canadian provincial officials are concerned that a rule requiring anyone entering or reentering the United States to have a passport will wreak havoc at the U.S. - Canada border. Elected officials on both sides of the northern border contend that the passport requirement, if adopted, would hurt the region's travel and tourism industry, impede trade, create long delays at border crossings and place undue hardship on frequent travelers who cross the border to go to work or visit family or friends.

To implement the U.S. Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, enacted by Congress in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the U.S. Departments of State (DoS) and Homeland Security (DHS) proposed the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) which would establish more secure border identification standards for travelers between the U.S. and other nations and territories in North, South, Central America and the Caribbean.

On September 1, 2005, the Homeland Security and State Departments published an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and opened a 60-day comment period on the requirement for a passport, or alternative documentation. The proposed rule, also known as the WHTI, would take effective beginning Jan. 1, 2008, for travelers entering or reentering the U.S. at a land border. For travelers crossing the border by air or sea, the WHTI initiative would take effect beginning Jan. 1, 2007.



At the urging of the CSG/ERC Eastern Canadian Provinces Committee officers, the CSG/ERC Executive Committee passed a resolution, at its October meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia, requesting that the federal government delay implementation of the WHTI. The CSG/ERC resolution, sent with a letter to DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and senior members of Congress, urged the federal agencies to consider less onerous and less costly travel documentation than a passport (*see Web site for text of the resolution*). The CSG National Executive Committee passed a similar resolution at its Annual Meeting in Wilmington, Delaware, in early December.

For families and low-income individuals, passports can be cost-prohibitive. The typical expense is \$97. Passports also take several weeks to process. As the vast majority of Americans, and most Canadians, currently do not have passports, elected officials are concerned that faced with the choice of obtaining a passport or staying home, citizens would simply choose the latter.

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Delaware Hosts National CSG Annual Meeting

Delaware's Governor Ruth Ann Minner, CSG President; Representative Roger Roy, CSG Vice-Chair; and the host state delegation welcomed over 800 state officials from across the country to the CSG 2005 Annual Trends and Leadership Forum held in December in Wilmington, Delaware.

The conference featured special presentations regarding a broad range of emerging trends including urban sprawl and its effect on farmland, public safety and justice issues confronting America's aging population, and the use of information technology to reduce costs while improving the quality of health care.

State officials discussed preparations for the new Medicare prescription drug benefit and the opportunity that state leaders have to help their constituents understand the new benefit and get them enrolled.

The dynamic lineup of keynote speakers included Louis Freeh, the former FBI director under Bill Clinton, author of *Delaware Annual Meeting, cont'd page 3*

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The officers of the ERC Eastern Canadian Provinces Committee traveled to Washington, D.C. on February 1-2 to pursue joint interests on the WHTI and to advocate for cross-border infrastructure initiatives. They met with senior U.S. Dept. of Transportation staff and key members of Congress.

The ERC Executive Committee members readily acknowledge the national security concerns at play in the development of the WHTI. At the same time, they argue that a solution must be found that does not threaten the region's economic security and the vital cultural and social relationships that have been established over many years. The economic and social impacts on the border communities would be particularly harsh. Further, ERC state and provincial officials argue that the WHTI would not protect citizens in the Northeast from a terrorist attack, as would-be terrorists are unlikely to use major border crossings.

Economic and Trade Impacts of the WHTI

Canada and the U.S. have the largest non-militarized common border in the world - 4,400 miles. The need to maintain a "seamless border" is underscored by the integrated economies of the border region and the frequent trips made by families, students and working people.

Canada and the U.S. also have the largest commercial trading relationship in the world. A truck-load of products crosses the border every two seconds. Ambassador Frank McKenna, speaking at the CSG Annual Meeting in Delaware, said Canada is biggest export market for every state in New England. Economic integration is crucial to the U.S.-Canada relationship and our economic competitiveness abroad. In the auto trade, Ambassador McKenna noted that an auto part travels across the border six times before the car is put on the lot for sale.

A recent report, prepared by Conference Board of Canada for the Canadian Tourism Commission, estimates that the passport rule would result in 3.5 million fewer trips into the U.S. from Canada by 2008, resulting in a loss of \$785 million in potential tourism revenue, and 7.7 million fewer trips by U.S. citizens into Canada, resulting in a \$1.7 billion loss in revenues.

Alternatives to the Passport Requirement

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act mandates that DHS develop a plan to require passport, other document or a combination to be sufficient to denote identity.

During a panel discussion on WHTI at the 2005 CSG Annual Meeting, Lisa Katz of the Detroit Chamber of Commerce said that other options should be explored including:

1. Alternative ID's for travelers under 16.
2. Northern Border ID Card.
3. Enhanced driver's licenses which feature all the security requirements of passports (Congress passed the REAL-ID Act in May 2005 which creates more stringent requirements for obtaining driver's licenses).

"Options that tip the balance too far away from economic security can be catastrophic," said Katz.

While driver's licenses currently do not prove nationality, state DMVs could provide the option of putting citizenship on the card. ■

Note: On January 17, DHS announced the U.S. would start issuing a special ID card this year that would allow Americans who travel frequently to Canada or Mexico to continue crossing the border without a passport. The card will have a picture of the holder and cost \$50. Citizens will be required to provide the same documentation needed to obtain a passport.

For more information, contact CSG/ERC Deputy Director, Wendell Hannaford: whannaford@csg.org

Eastern Innovations Award Winners

CSG's Innovations Awards Program was established in 1986 to bring visibility to exemplary state programs and policies and to facilitate the transfer of the successful models to other states. At the CSG Annual Meeting in Delaware, the following programs from the Eastern Region received the Innovations Award:

New Jersey's DNA Convicted Offender Sampling and Testing Program ensures that offenders and their DNA samples are properly identified and entered into the state's criminal records database. In 2003, New Jersey instituted legislation that all persons convicted of an indictable crime are required to submit to DNA identification. The program uses handheld biometric computers to read a single sample fingerprint and biometric computers to take full fingerprints of convicted offenders. With these computers, information on offenders is captured correctly and quickly. Also, the state criminal record database is available to other states.

For more information, contact Thomas J. O'Reilly, administrator, Office of the Attorney General, at (609) 292-9660.

New York's Pharmacy Service and Clinical Knowledge Enhancement System (PSYCKES) is an innovative health information technology product implemented in the state mental health system. PSYCKES provides access to medication guidelines and medical information that physicians and other clinicians can review and assess in order to prescribe an appropriate and effective medication regimen for their patients. PSYCKES also provides information for quality managers. This innovative system to access patient history and clinical resources is a secure, HIPAA compliant application that requires three levels of security clearance.

So far, no other state has developed a mechanism for sharing all clinically relevant data with treating physicians in a flexible, point of service, Web-based manner. It is the first example of an integrated, guideline-driven, clinical and fiscal decision support system for psychiatry. ■

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