

## Rothman Secures House Panel's Approval Of Funds To Bolster New Jersey DMV Security

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Congressman Also Gets Committee to OK Dollars to Ease Route 17 Congestion and Develop Bergen Light Rail

Washington, DC - As part of his ongoing commitment to help New Jersey crack down on identity theft and fraud at Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) facilities, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) today announced that he has secured a House panel's approval of \$300,000 to bolster physical security at the state's DMV branch offices. The House Appropriations Committee, of which Rothman is a member, approved the Transportation Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2003, which also includes \$100,000 to help relieve traffic congestion on Route 17 and \$4.5 million to develop light rail in Bergen County.

"In the war on terrorism, in which security checks are one of our first lines of defense, it is absolutely critical that we prevent fake IDs from being issued to anyone, especially into the hands of those who seek to do us harm," said Rothman, who noted that two of the September 11th hijackers had improperly obtained New Jersey driver's licenses for use as identification. "While it is still a major problem that needs to be addressed, we are no longer just talking about stopping underage kids from getting a fake ID to purchase alcohol. This is a matter of national security. These funds will go directly toward improving the physical security of New Jersey's DMV sites to catch and stop those who are perpetrating acts of fraud and endangering the lives of countless New Jerseyans and Americans."

With dozens of indictments handed down against individuals accused of fraudulently selling New Jersey DMV documents, including driver's licenses, learner's permits, and vehicle titles, Rothman worked with his fellow members of the House Appropriations Committee to secure the funds for New Jersey's DMV physical security. The federal dollars will help pay for the installation of new alarm systems, security cameras, better locks, panic buttons, and other safety measures. Rothman is continuing to pursue additional means of securing funds for New Jersey's DMV security, including obtaining other federal grants.

Also included in the Transportation Appropriations bill is \$100,000 to assist with plans to relieve Route 17 traffic congestion. Potential solutions that will be examined include the widening of Passaic Street, new traffic signals, and realignment of the Route 17 off ramp. Additionally, the measure provides \$4.5 million for engineers to proceed with plans for the development of light rail in Bergen County. The engineers will examine ways to link existing commuter rail corridors, highways, and bus service with a Bergen Light Rail network. An important component of this initiative is the development of plans for rail/highway transfer hubs that would allow motorists to get off the highways and onto railways in an effort to reduce roadway congestion.

"These funds will allow engineers to develop the best plan to alleviate Route 17 traffic congestion, and relieve the frustration that thousands of New Jersey residents experience each day as they are stuck in their cars waiting for traffic to let up," Rothman said. "Furthermore, as one of the most densely populated regions in the entire country, Northeastern New Jersey is very much in need of light rail to relieve congestion on our roads and to improve the quality of life for Bergen and Hudson County residents. These funds will take us another step closer to unclogging our roadways, and providing new rail service options for New Jersey's commuters."

The Transportation Appropriations bill is one of 13 spending bills that Congress is required to pass each year. The measure now moves to the House floor for a vote. The full Senate also needs to vote on its version of the measure. Following Congressional approval, the bill moves to the White House where it needs to be signed by the president to become law.

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