

Alaska State Legislature

Interim:
119 N. Cushman, Suite 211
Fairbanks, AK 99701
(907) 456-5081 - Phone
(907) 456-8245 - Fax



Session:
State Capitol, Room 102
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 465-3719 - Phone
(907) 465-3258 - Fax

Representative John Coghill

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 2, 2001

CONTACT: Rep. John Coghill, Jr.: (907) 465-3719

Senate Drops SSN from Driver's Licenses **Coghill's HB 110 Protects Privacy, Resists National ID Trend**

(JUNEAU) – A lost drivers license will be an inconvenience, but not a potential tragedy, under a bill passed by the Senate today to take Social Security numbers off Alaska driver's licenses.

House Bill 110, sponsored by Rep. John Coghill, Jr. (R-Fairbanks), would end the state's authority to print Social Security numbers on operator's and commercial driver's licenses, though it would preserve the Division of Motor Vehicles' power to retain the numbers in state driver databases.

Coghill said the bill is a victory for Alaskans' privacy rights, and provides important protection for consumers against the growing threat of identity theft, in which a criminal can use the access provided by a Social Security number to plunder a victim's financial, medical, or personal information.

“The Social Security number has become a *de facto* national identification number, used by banks, insurance companies, credit agencies, and hospitals,” said Coghill. “Driver's licenses already include a citizen's picture, signature, birth date, home address and physical description. Add in a Social Security number, and you've got what amounts to a pass key to the person's whole life.”

The bill is part of Coghill's larger effort to restrict the use of the Social Security number to its original and rightful use, as the bearer's federal retirement account number. The Legislature also today passed his House Bill 48, which eliminates the numbers from state hunting and fishing licenses.

“Social Security numbers play an important role in federal government's social welfare programs, but those who would inappropriately expand them into some kind of national ID are abusing the trust of U.S. citizens,” Coghill said.

The bill, which takes effect immediately, will also apply to Alaska State Identification Cards and commercial driver's licenses as well as operators licenses. It will also allow citizens who do not have Social Security numbers, but who otherwise qualify, to receive such licenses or cards.

The measure now goes to the governor.

###