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MEMORANDUM

TO: SENATE STATE GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
FROM: LARRY FRANKEL
DATE: FEBRUARY 11, 2008
RE: SENATE BILL 9

I attended the public hearing on Senate Bill 9 and listened to all of the testimony that was presented at that hearing. No evidence was presented that there is in fact a problem that needs to be addressed. Secretary Richman herself presented a detailed explanation of all of the steps that the Commonwealth is taking to make sure that public benefits are not being improperly paid to persons who are not lawfully present. This bill addresses a virtually non-existent problem.

This bill, however, would create problems and cause harm for thousands of people who were born in the United States or who have become lawful citizens. It will hurt those individuals who have lost their identification through no fault of their own. Some citizens do not have identification because it has been stolen by a thief or seized by an abuser. Some do not have identification because it has been lost in a flood or fire. Some do not have identification because government agencies are notoriously inefficient in issuing replacement identification including birth certificates. Why should these citizens be denied benefits?

We have reviewed a proposed amendment and we do not believe it cures the fundamental flaws of Senate Bill 9. Even with this amendment, this legislation will adversely impact thousands of Pennsylvanians. It will also cost the taxpayers a considerable sum of money, funds that can be better spent to meet the many needs discussed by the Governor and all legislative leaders last week.

The ACLU of Pennsylvania urges you to oppose Senate Bill 9.