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Congress of the United States
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PROBLEM SOLVERS CAUCUS
VICE-CHAIRMAN

February 6, 2026

Ms. Rosalie Johnson
Acting Chief Administrator
New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission
P.O. Box 403
Trenton, NJ 08666

Acting Chief Administrator Johnson:

As you know, New Jersey has the lowest REAL ID compliance rate in the country, with only seventeen percent of residents in possession of a REAL ID, according to a number released last spring.¹ Now, the Transportation Security Agency (TSA) has announced that passengers who arrive at the airport without a REAL ID will be charged a \$45 fee.² A passport is acceptable, but those, too, are expensive and take several weeks to process.

Now facing a costly penalty, far too many residents still cannot secure appointments to get a REAL ID in New Jersey. I have heard from my constituents across North Jersey about this problem. That is why I am pleased that Governor Sherrill has appointed you as Chief Administrator of the NJ Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC). In your previous role in Colorado, you implemented solutions that reduced DMV wait times and led the state to a ninety-seven percent REAL ID compliance rate.³

Appointment availability here in Jersey remains scarce, with many MVC locations booked months in advance.⁴ This month alone, twenty-one of the twenty-eight MVC locations statewide list April 2026 as the earliest available appointment date.⁵ I'm sure you will agree that New Jersey residents deserve timely access to REAL ID appointments, especially given the new penalty.

I recognize that you just inherited this issue, but I kindly ask that you direct the MVC to take immediate, all-hands-on-deck action, including: expanding appointment capacity statewide, extending evening and weekend hours, deploying mobile and pop-up REAL ID services, and pursuing other creative solutions that can quickly increase access. Other states have

¹ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/real-id-deadline-weeks-away-most-states-not-fully-compliant-yet/>

² <https://www.tsa.gov/news/press/releases/2025/12/01/tsa-introduces-new-45-fee-option-for-travelers-without-real-id>

³ <https://www.nj.gov/govlect/news/20260112a.shtml>

⁴ <https://www.nj.gov/mvc/index.html>

⁵ <https://www.nj.com/news/2026/01/real-id-licenses-are-still-tough-to-get-could-aaa-help-new-jersey-drivers.html>

demonstrated that far higher compliance rates are achievable, and New Jersey should not lag behind.

REAL ID is now a federal requirement, and the state had years to prepare for it. New Jersey residents should not face added fees, missed trips for business or to see loved ones, or unnecessary stress because the system failed to keep pace. The state must act decisively to fix this issue. I look forward to working with you and your team to remedy this situation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Gottheimer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "G".

Josh Gottheimer
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

cc: The Honorable Mikie Sherrill
Governor of New Jersey