

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 6, 2012

Ambassador Zhang Yesui
Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America
3505 International Place NW
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Ambassador Zhang:

We are writing with grave concern regarding recent reports detailing how individuals can obtain high quality counterfeit driver's licenses from companies based in China, as relayed in a June 10, 2012, *USA Today* article. Counterfeit identification documents violate our nation's laws and undermine the efforts of federal, state and local law enforcement to keep our communities safe. Given the obvious public safety and national security risks, we write to request that the Chinese government take immediate action against these companies.

A state identification document, including driver's licenses, is one of the most important pieces of identification in the United States. Driver's licenses are used for a whole host of purposes, including opening a bank account, obtaining a United States Passport, boarding an airplane and verifying identity for employment. Much of our daily life depends on the validity of these documents and they serve an important purpose in authenticating a person's identity. In 2011, U.S. Customs and Border Protection at O'Hare Airport in Chicago, IL seized over 1,700 counterfeit driver's licenses.

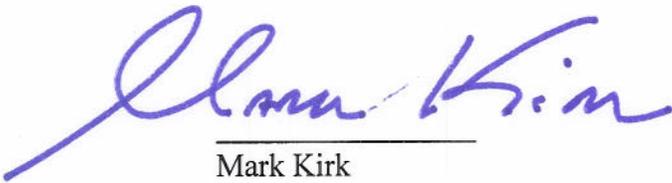
Unfortunately, some companies allow an individual the opportunity to electronically insert a digital photo and false biographic information into any state identification document template. For a few hundred American dollars, whole identities can be falsely created for the purpose of receiving a state identification document. These companies contain templates for the driver's licenses of more than 20 states - many of which will be the standard for years to come. One company, *ID Chief*, stands out as one of the largest producers of counterfeit U.S. driver's licenses. The companies understand the harm in their behavior, which is why they mail the identification documents to their customers concealed in puzzles or clothing. To make matters worse, recent reports have indicated that the companies use this transaction to harvest sensitive personal data to sell to identity thieves. The Illinois driver's license is one of the most counterfeited licenses. The following is a link to the *ID Chief* web site and a video of the actual production of a counterfeit Illinois driver's license, <http://www.idchief.ph/videos-of-ids/>.

Identification authentication plays an integral role in our homeland security. For example, safe facilitation of air travel relies heavily on driver's licenses. Every year, millions of passengers present a driver's license to a transportation security officer at a security checkpoint with their boarding pass. The name on the boarding pass is matched to the name on the driver's license presented. We remain concerned that high-quality counterfeit identification documents will get into the hands of terrorists that can use them to circumvent our security infrastructure in their plot to harm our country.

In addition to inciting identity theft, counterfeit identification documents present obvious risks to our public safety and national security. These companies are profiting from the facilitation of crimes committed in the United States, and provide no legitimate service. We ask the Chinese government to take a strong stance and work to put an end to these companies.

We appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Mark Kirk
U.S. Senator



Richard J. Durbin
U.S. Senator



Charles E. Grassley
U.S. Senator



Tom Harkin
U.S. Senator

CC: The Honorable Hillary Clinton, U.S. Secretary of State

H.E. Yang Jiechi, Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China