

JOHN A. LAWRENCE
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
13TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

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Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Secretary Leslie Richards
Keystone Building
400 North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120

March 23, 2015

Dear Secretary Richards –

I trust you are well.

Recently, a constituent contacted me regarding the reissuance of her driver's license. According to published press reports, a vendor supplied defective materials to PennDOT, resulting in the issuance of a number of driver's licenses without standard security features. This is regrettable but certainly mistakes happen from time to time, and perhaps such an error could be excused.

I am more concerned about what happened after the error was discovered. Our mutual constituent contact me and shared this extremely disappointing story – a few weeks after renewing her license, she received what looked like a piece of junk mail. She was not expecting anything from PennDOT; she had no reason to be "on the lookout." The envelope she received did not have the standard, large, prominent warning "IMPORTANT MATERIALS FROM PENNDOT" to catch her attention. In fact, she was about to throw it in the trash unopened when, on a whim, she opened it only to find a new driver's license inside. The license was attached to a non-descript piece of white paper - it was not even printed on PennDOT letterhead.

Our constituent contacted PennDOT for an explanation, and she learned about the security feature issue. Apparently, the vendor in question reissued the affected licenses using information supplied by PennDOT, and then the vendor mailed the new licenses to the affected individuals.

In my view, this situation brings a number of issues to light that deserve serious attention. I would appreciate your review and response on the following questions:

- When the issue was first discovered, why did PennDOT choose to put the vendor in charge of reissuing the affected licenses? Why didn't PennDOT simply contact the affected individuals and ask them to come in to a PennDOT facility for a new license?
- Apparently the vendor received a large volume of personal data from PennDOT to facilitate the reissuance of the affected licenses. What security protocols were in place to ensure this extremely sensitive data was properly handled? Could you provide a copy of the signed contract that shows PennDOT and the vendor agreed to ensure the confidentiality of this information?
- What protocols were in place to ensure that the reissued licenses were actually received by the intended recipients? Since the issue was caused by a vendor error, why didn't PennDOT require the vendor to send the licenses by registered mail, or some other form of mail that at least required a signature from the recipient? Why didn't PennDOT require the vendor to use Federal Express or some other delivery method that could be properly tracked to ensure receipt?
- As already mentioned, the affected individuals had no reason to suspect something as critical as a driver's license was going to come in the mail. Why wasn't this mailing placed into an official PennDOT envelope, or at least flagged with the standard PennDOT warning?
- How many of the reissued driver's licenses have been returned to PennDOT as undeliverable? What has been done in those situations?
- What accountability measures have been put into place to ensure similar issues do not occur in the future?
- Will PennDOT continue to use this vendor, or does this incident remove the vendor from PennDOT's list of suppliers?
- If a driver's license is intercepted in the mail by an identity thief, what protection is in place for the affected individual?
- **Most importantly, how would an affected individual know if an identity thief intercepted their reissued driver's license?**
- What assurance does PennDOT have that an identity thief did not intercept any of these licenses? How would you ever know? How would the affected driver know? PennDOT (and the vendor who mailed the licenses) did not track the letters, and the recipients didn't know to be looking for them.

I would appreciate a thorough investigation of this matter, with special emphasis on how the department plans to avoid a similar situation in the future. I would also like to know if PennDOT plans to offer identity theft protection to the affected individuals.

For your reference, please find enclosed several pictures of the correspondence in question.

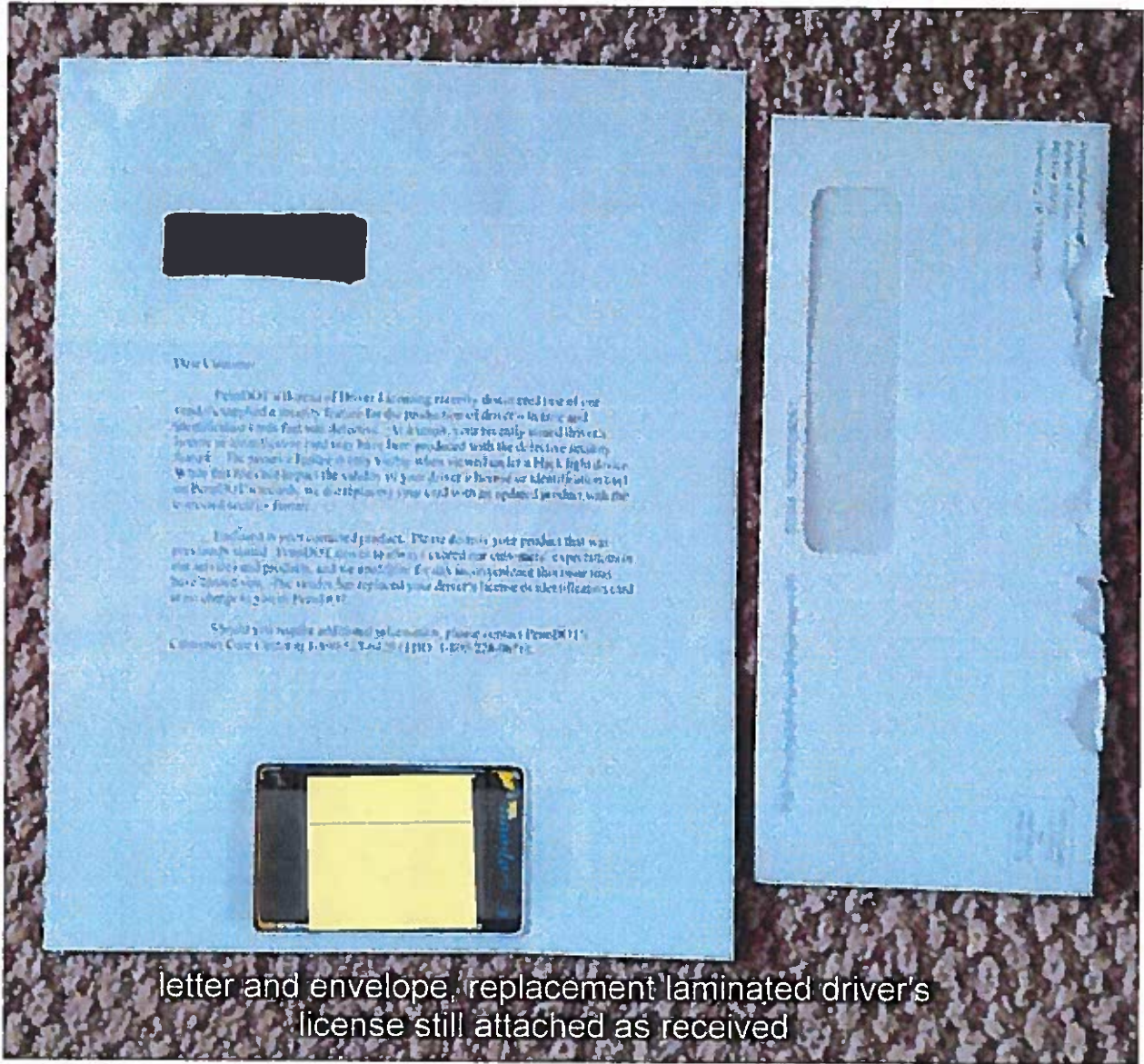
Thank you very much for your service to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Lawrence", with a stylized flourish at the end.

John Lawrence
State Representative
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Cc: Affected Constituents
The Honorable John Taylor, Chairman, House Transportation Committee



letter and envelope, replacement laminated driver's license still attached as received

closeup of return address on envelope

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Bureau of Driver Licensing
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