

## Using facial recognition to enhance driver license security and public safety

**Issue:** Individuals in our state are fraudulently obtaining Washington state driver licenses and ID cards—a serious risk to the safety and economic health of our residents and businesses. DOL has a proven, non-evasive facial recognition system in place to help prevent this illegal activity, but lacks the authority to use it to monitor regular transactions for potential fraud.

The use of facial recognition in our Enhanced Driver License program and during a pilot program from November 2009 through June 2011 allows us to conclude we need this system in place to make sure we are doing everything can to protect public safety and the personal identity information of our state's residents.

In 2011, the use of facial recognition by our agency resulted in 571 driver licenses suspensions and the cancellation of 560 fraudulent records and the associated cards. We also are working our way through 3,800 more cases of fraud identified by the facial recognition system during the pilot program.

The use of facial recognition in our Enhanced Driver License program and our pilot program has identified three primary reasons individuals fraudulently obtain multiple driver licenses or ID cards. These are:

- To continue driving after a driver license suspension or revocation
- To purchase or consume alcohol as a minor
- To engage in criminal activities including identity theft

Our facial recognition system also has allowed us to identify cases where individuals were maintaining multiple identities to fraudulently collect benefits through state entitlement programs.

We do not share the use of the system with law enforcement or the other agencies without a court order and do not release facial recognition system results. When necessary, we simply provide investigative information about individuals we find that have multiple identities in our system and appear to be committing fraud. Our partner agencies then use the information to determine if the individual is committing some type of identity theft or entitlement fraud.

**Proposed Solution:** DOL is seeking legislation that would give us authority to use facial recognition during regular driver license and ID card processes. This will help us enforce state law prohibiting individuals from having more than one driver license and will give us a proven tool needed protect public safety and stop individuals from hijacking others' driver records for fraudulent purposes.

**SB 6150**  
**HB 2433**



### By the numbers

**254,095 — Washington residents who were identity theft victims in 2006**

**\$1.22 billion — estimated annual cost of identity theft to Washington consumers in 2006**

**\$4,600 — the average amount victims paid per incident of identity theft**

**11 million — estimated number of ID theft victims nationwide in 2006**

(Sources: Identity Theft in Washington State White Paper, December 2007, ID Theft 911, LCC; Consumer Sentinel Network Complaint Data: January-December 2010, March 2011, Federal Trade Commission)