

# Audit: Mass. RMV vulnerable to scammers seeking fake licenses

Ripe for fraud



Photo by: Boston Herald File

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CALL FOR CHANGE: State Rep. Geoffrey G. Diehl, left, obtained internal RMV audits that found the agency was susceptible to fraud. Registrar of Motor Vehicles Erin Deveney, center, and Gov. Charlie Baker recently cut ties with the company charged with fixing the agency's out-of-date registration system.

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By: Hillary Chabot

The Registry of Motor Vehicles remains extremely vulnerable to illegal immigrants and other fraudsters looking for fake Massachusetts licenses, according to an internal audit that comes as Gov. Charlie Baker axed a company charged with fixing the out-of-date registration system.

Internal audits found that the RMV — which recently has been plagued with service glitches — isn't equipped to convert out-of-state licenses and is “consequently at an increased vulnerability for identity fraud.”

Massachusetts Department of Transportation spokesman Michael Verseckes said RMV officials will continue to update their systems despite Baker's recent decision to dump Deloitte Consulting, the company charged with modernizing RMV's software.

“Although we recently separated from our vendor to advance modernization efforts, our goal remains to deliver the best service we can to our customers who expect and deserve no less,” said Verseckes in a statement.

The audits, obtained by state Rep. Geoffrey G. Diehl (R-Whitman), revealed several vulnerabilities in the department's ancient Automated License and Registration System. The state has paid Deloitte Consulting \$17 million since 2013 to update the system, but Registrar of Motor Vehicles Erin Deveney abruptly cut ties with the agency Friday.

“No new work will be taking place on this program effective immediately and we will begin to work on an orderly transition plan,” she wrote to RMV staffers.

The fraud concerns follow several incidents of illegal immigrants assuming fake identities because they were able to get Massachusetts driver's licenses.

In addition to fraud, audits found that the system currently gives even the lowest-ranking RMV clerks the ability to waive fees, and uncovered shoddy record-keeping when it comes to hearing officers and reinstating suspended licenses.

Diehl said he wants Baker's new five-member financial control board — approved in the recent budget — to address the ongoing fraud.

“The control board should jump on these ongoing issues with fraud and oversight at the registry,” he said. “We better see a lot of these issues addressed in those audits or else there will be real problems.”

Verseckes said RMV officials will continue to modernize the system and have other safeguards to prevent fraud when dealing with out-of-state conversions.

“Those transactions are audited and we also have systemic features in place — document authentication,

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facial recognition — that serve as fraud deterrents," he said.

Diehl noted that Baker's move means the new governor isn't afraid to cut ties with private companies or unions who aren't holding up their end of the bargain. Earlier last week, members of the Carmen's Union sharply criticized Baker as he pushed to reform the MBTA.

"It shows whether it's a private company or public employees that the governor is looking to make changes," Diehl said.

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Author(s):



Hillary Chabot / Boston Herald  
hillary.chabot@bostonherald.com

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