

**Public Statement in Support of
Proposed Bill 13-141
"Prohibition Against the Use of Social Security Numbers Act of 1999"**

by the

Antitrust, Trade Regulation and Consumer Affairs Section of the D.C. Bar.

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"Prohibition Against the Use of Social Security Numbers Act of 1999"

The District of Columbia's Department of Motor Vehicles currently uses social security numbers as D.C. driver's license numbers. This practice puts D.C. drivers at risk for having their social security numbers accessed and misused for financial fraud. As part of its privacy reform/identity theft project, members of the Antitrust Trade Regulation and Consumer Affairs Section of the D.C. Bar and its Consumer Affairs Committee met with administrators of the D.C. Department of Motor Vehicles last year, resulting in a commitment from the DMV to implement steps that increase privacy protections for D.C. license holders.

As a result of these discussions the DMV has publicized the availability of computer generated numbers in lieu of the display of social security numbers on D.C. licenses. New signs have been prominently posted within the DMV to inform drivers of this option, and DMV staff have been retrained in the procedures necessary to issue computer generated numbers upon request.

However, the majority of D.C. residents still have, and likely will continue to have their social security numbers used as drivers' licenses numbers until this jurisdiction prohibits the use of social security numbers for this purpose.

District Councilmember Phil Mendelson introduced Bill 13-141, titled "Prohibition Against the Use of Social Security Numbers Act of 1999" on March 2, 1999. This bill, co-sponsored by Councilmember Kevin Chavous, has been referred to the Committee on Public Works and Environment. The proposed legislation will, "amend the District of Columbia Traffic Control Act of 1925 and the Uniform Classification and Commercial Driver's License Act of 1990, to prohibit the Mayor from using social security numbers as identification numbers for driver's licenses." See, attached proposed legislation, Bill 13-141.

The Section believes that this legislation is a necessary step to insure the privacy of D.C. driver's social security numbers and to protect residents from the fraudulent use of their social security numbers by identity thieves who use this information to access and drain bank accounts, to open fraudulent lines of credit, and to access private financial, educational or medical records.

The Section on Antitrust, Trade Regulation and Consumer Affairs of the D.C. Bar supports this legislation and encourages the D.C. Council to pass proposed Bill 13-141. The Section offers its assistance to the D.C. Council in its consideration of this and other consumer related proposals. The Section also welcomes input regarding additional measures that might be taken to aid D.C. consumers.