

# State: Stop running immigration status on car tags

## Atty. general: Temporarily stop verifying statuses

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MOBILE, Ala. (WALA) - Alabama's new illegal immigration law has brought a whirlwind of changes to the Mobile County License Commissioner's Office. After the passing of the law initially required it, the State Attorney General's Office has called for state agencies to stop verifying immigration status for certain things, including car tags.

Mobile County License Commissioner Kim Hastie said the changes can be a challenge to keep up with.

"[It's put] a lot of burden on us," said Hastie. "When it started in September, [we] went into October with the new requirements. So the fifth day of October, the state says, 'Give them until the 20th,' but we had already charged penalties to people because they did not have all the proper documentation in time. We had to reimburse 1,700 people."

Hastie said she pointed out the problems before the law was passed. She is pleased to hear officials are taking another look at its implementation.

"That is all I've asked for anyway. I just say, 'Stop, take your time and see the repercussions and act on them before you put requirements on the tax payer,'" said Hastie.

Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange called for government officials across the state to stop requiring people to show proof of citizenship or verify their legal status for things such as car tags until they establish a relationship with the SAVE program.

SAVE, or [Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements](#) , is a government run program designed to verify a person's status.

"I do not even know what the SAVE is, and we've asked them. They said they are not ready, they are not sure, and they will get back to us. [I was] told by someone at the state that there may be a charge for each transaction. Who is going to pay for that? We don't want to put that on the tax payer," said Hastie.

According to the [U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services website](#) , the process can involve several steps, and verification is not always immediate. It can sometimes take as long as 20 days.

In the meantime, people must sign a declaration of citizenship stating that they are in the United States legally.

In October, the Mobile County Commission approved a [one-time expenditure](#) of \$150,000 to the License Commissioner's Office to help implement the state's new illegal immigration law. The money came from the county's reserve funding and helped buy needed office equipment to verify a person's citizenship status.

Hastie said even though the equipment is not being used right now, it was not money wasted.

"That is a good thing anyway. All the other agencies have scanners. That will actually help us in the long run to have less employees. With all the filing and record keeping we do now, we can just scan it, so we don't have to do that," said Hastie.

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