



# Jesse White

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## SECRETARY OF STATE

# NEWS

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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### GOVERNOR SIGNS BILL TO SUSPEND DRIVING PRIVILEGES FOR BRIBERS

(Springfield)—Secretary of State Jesse White thanked Governor Rod Blagojevich today for signing legislation that allows the Secretary of State to suspend driving privileges for people who attempt to bribe driving examiners.

The measure also extends criminal felony provisions for bribes involving driving examiners to include commercial driving schools and trucking companies who provide third party testing. Current law allows criminal penalties for bribing public officials - in this case secretary of state employees.

"I want to thank the Governor and the General Assembly for continuing to support our efforts to fight corruption," White said. "We will not tolerate bribes that put unqualified drivers on the road. A driver's license in the hands of an unskilled driver places all other motorists at risk."

Senate Bill 2167 would allow the Secretary of State to suspend a driver's license or prevent an application for a driver's license for 120 days for anyone caught trying to bribe a driving examiner. White said the ability to deny or suspend a license is an important component because small bribe attempts often do not get prosecuted.

In addition, the legislation clearly defines the act of bribery to obtain driving privileges and brings driving schools, trucking companies who administer third party testing, and all other individuals who administer driving instructions or tests into the fold. Under the measure it would be a Class 2 felony for any person to offer or give a bribe to anyone authorized by law to provide driving instructions or administer driver's license examinations. A Class 2 felony carries penalties that include imprisonment for three to seven years and fines up to \$25,000.

White credited his Inspector General Jim Burns, a former US Attorney from the Northern District of Illinois, for bringing the initiative to his attention. Burns said that while bribery cases have fallen off under his watch, he wants to ensure that the tools are available in all cases to penalize offenders including those who offer bribes.

"It takes two sides to complete a bribe," Burns said. "We should not lose sight of the fact that the so-called culture of corruption included the driving applicants as well as employees and driving schools. This legislation would allow the secretary of state's office to take action even if the briber is not prosecuted."

The bill's Chief Sponsors were State senator Patrick Welch (D-Peru) and State Rep. Careen Gordon (D-Coal City).

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