

The Real ID Act is an earnest step toward staving identity theft, says president of IDTheftSecurity.com

(BOSTON, Mass., August 16, 2005 - IDTheftSecurity.com) Through social engineering or other means, thieves can learn everything they need to know to steal identities on a massive scale. While watchdog groups decry countermeasures such as The Real ID Act as invasions of privacy, Robert Siciliano, a Boston, Mass.–based identity theft and personal security expert, says the added security will stave identity theft in the face of increasingly brazen robberies.

"I don't even need to get your Social Security number behind your back to steal it," said Siciliano, a nationally televised and quoted authority on personal security and identity theft. "All I need to be is a good liar. This is called social engineering. It's low-tech, and it works so well, thieves even without computers can easily steal identities."

Siciliano is author of "The Safety Minute: 01" and an upcoming book, "Identity Theft Pandemic: Curing the Identity Theft Virus." He appeared on CNBC's "The Closing Bell" shortly after data breaches at ChoicePoint Inc. highlighted the problem of identity theft earlier this year.

The *Associated Press* reported on Aug. 12 that Olatunji Oluwatoisn, the only person charged in the ChoicePoint robbery, now faces six charges in addition to those he faces from earlier this year. He was allegedly part of a Nigerian identity theft ring that used social engineering techniques to gain access to ChoicePoint Inc.'s database. The massive heist of Social Security numbers and other sensitive identifying information lasted for about a year before news of the breach broke.

"I always tell people that they might as well plaster their Social Security numbers across billboards along major highways throughout the nation," Siciliano said. "It's the key to the kingdom of identity theft, but not an especially challenging key to obtain. The billboards, in this case, are data brokers and others who have few laws to follow. Government must rethink how the private sector handles personal financial information."

An Aug. 10 article in *The Christian Science Monitor* quoted privacy and government officials debating the anticipated consequences of The Real ID Act, which Congress passed in May 2005.

"People read about The Real ID Act and think, 'I can't believe how the government is fiddling with my privacy,'" Siciliano said, "It is upsetting to learn that so many people have access to your personal information, but it is important to realize, too, that privacy went the way of the dinosaur a long time ago."

"With identity theft running rampant, we need security," Siciliano continued. "People think they want privacy, but what they may really want is to know their information is secure. Security and privacy, in this day and age, cannot coexist."

“The Real ID Act is an earnest step toward effective authentication in identification,” Siciliano added. “It is an improved way to stave identity theft. It begins to provide true peace of mind in identification.”

“The Real ID Act is a step in the right direction,” Siciliano concluded. “As we implement it, people will learn just how available their information is—and just how impossible it is to change this fact. They will soon give up on the futile battle for privacy and start to demand security.”

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Siciliano provides consumer education solutions to Fortune 500 companies and their clients. He has been featured on CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, "ABC News with Sam Donaldson," "The Montel Williams Show," "Maury Povich," "Sally Jesse Raphael" and "The Howard Stern Show." Siciliano also leads personal safety and security seminars nationwide.

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