Montana State Legislature. Both houses of the legislature approved this legislation unanimously. Thirteen other States have anti-REAL ID legislation that has passed one of the houses of the legislature. In Montana and the rest of these States, opposition to the poorly constructed law is bipartisan.

That is why I am pleased to once again offer my support for the Identification Security Enhancement Act, introduced by Senator AKAKA and Senator Baucus—another bipartisan show of opposition to the REAL ID Act.

Why is there so much opposition to REAL ID beyond the beltway? It comes down to three reasons. First, the REAL ID Act puts massive new Federal regulations on the States. From new databases and fraud monitoring, to new network and data storage capacity, the States will be tasked with an enormous range of new regulations and requirements. Once REAL ID becomes effective, all Department of Motor Vehicles will have to play immigration official by reconciling discrepancies in social security numbers with the Social Security Administration. DMVs will have to require proof of "legal presence" in the United States for immigrants.

I am for a strong immigration policy. I believe we ought to enforce our borders and enforce the laws we have on the books. But it is completely unreasonable for the Federal Government to put that job on the Montana Department of Motor Vehicles, or any other State's DMV.

And these new regulations carry with them a hefty pricetag. DHS now estimates that REAL ID will cost the states and their taxpayers $32.1 billion.

Finally, REAL ID raises some very real privacy concerns. Data mining and data theft have become all too common phrases for too many Americans who resent having their personal information collected by the government, or worse, having it stolen from the government. We all recall the massive potential problems that arose from the theft of personal data from the VA last year. I have no doubt that the databases called for in REAL ID will be an even greater target for data thieves.

We can do better than REAL ID. Senator Akaka's legislation shows that. Today, Montana adds its voice to those calling for the Federal Government to go back to its drawing board. Let's listen to what Montana has to say.

PAYOLA SETTLEMENT

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President. I would like to briefly comment on an important settlement that has been recently announced by the Federal Communications Commission, FCC.

Four major radio station groups, Clear Channel, Entercom, Citadel, and CBS Radio, have taken an important first step in cleaning up the radio industry through today's consent decree with the FCC and side agreement with the independent music community on airplay and rules of engagement. I want to especially commend Commissioner Adelstein for his tireless work to bring these groups together and then-Attorney General Spitzer for spearheading the initial investigation that has led to State and now Federal settlements.

I was encouraged to see internal business reforms, increased recordkeeping for transactions between labels and radio stations and unfettered access to these records by the FCC as part of the consent decrees. While these provisions are not as broad as those included in my previous payola legislation, the increased recordkeeping and disclosure in the consent decrees represent a step in the right direction. Transparency and accountability through sustained oversight will go a long way in eliminating the pervasive shadowy practices that have plagued the radio industry on and off almost since its inception.

While the consent decrees do not directly admit wrongdoing, the payment of $12.5 million to the U.S. Treasury from the four station groups is an implicit acknowledgement that the evidence presented by then-Attorney General Eliot Spitzer showed that significant abuses had taken place. From all accounts, the stations also deserve some credit for working in good faith with the FCC and the independent music community to work toward a solution.

I applaud the Federal Government for taking the next step of building on this settlement some time soon, that voted for this massive tax increase in U.S. history amid massive national inattention.

But I don't know that, eh? The Dems are already pushing through the largest tax increase in U.S. history! And nobody is paying attention!

Anyway, Hilzoy digs a bit further into the story. It really is worth reading.

Long story short . . . Republican Congresses chose not to make their tax cuts (or, as PGL would note, their tax deferments) permanent, well, that's the equivalent of the Republican Congresses that preceded it. They didn't have to put in a sunset clause—they chose to, in an attempt to make large tax cuts permanent. They didn't have to make the tax cut permanent. They didn't have to put in a sunset clause—they chose to, in an attempt to make large tax cuts permanent.

The situation no longer looks quite so bad. Of the new Democratic Congress doesn't do what the Republican Congresses that preceded it failed to do, namely make the tax cut permanent, well, that's the equivalent of the Democrats pushing the largest tax increase in history.

Maybe it's just me . . . but since this whole thing was planned and executed by a Republican Congress under a Republican President, shouldn't we be referring to this as the Republican's tax increase? And my bet is that there are a lot of Republicans in Congress now, and that will be seeking re-election some time soon, that voted for this massive tax increase.

Blue Bunting: Tuesday April 3, 2007, 8:32 pm

Fact Check

Robert Novak wrote this in today's Washington Post:

"Following the example set by their Senate brethren last Friday, House Democrats will adopt a budget resolution containing the largest tax increase in U.S. history amid massive national inattention.

Nobody's tax payments will increase imme-diately, but the budget resolutions set a pattern for years ahead. The House version