



FIXING THE DMV

Let's be honest – nobody likes going to the DMV. Wait times regularly turn what should be a quick visit into a daylong ordeal. Residents who should be treated as well as customers at any private business are subjected to extended delays, confusing requirements, and poor service. Errands that require ten minutes in other states require a day off work in Connecticut. Even efforts to upgrade the system become mired in delay and disappointment.

It doesn't have to be that way.

The DMV touches almost all Connecticut residents. It's one of the most common interactions between Connecticut families and their government – and our DMV is stuck in the past.

I will take it into the 21st century. Cloud-based technologies customers expect in other states and other sectors could transform the DMV. Like New Yorkers, our residents should be able to renew a license from the comfort of their homes. Like Californians, they should be able to schedule all DMV appointments over their phones. And like customers at other crowded businesses such as airline check-in counters and popular restaurants, those who visit DMV service centers should be greeted by modern and efficient technologies: kiosks that allow them to bypass long lines for simple services and the option of receiving a text message when a window is ready.

Many of those transformative technologies can be rolled out from day one. Others require we finally get serious about updating and integrating the DMV's three principal computer systems. Those systems -- a forty-year-old licensing mainframe, a distributed registration platform, and an online payment and scheduling tool for learners permits and road tests -- have different code bases, and don't talk to each other well. For too long, the DMV has focused on patchwork solutions rather than on creating a unified architecture. If we don't act now, we'll continue to fall further and further behind.

We all watched as the DMV botched its initial effort to unify those computer systems. Residents grew frustrated. Wait times skyrocketed to as long as eight hours. The images of lines out the doors of the branches were startling. Connecticut watched as the DMV went back and forth with its vendor, and as the agency struggled to adapt to a new system. Even today, years after that partial roll-out, wait times at the DMV routinely exceed two hours.

It has to change.

I will implement a common-sense plan to make the DMV more efficient. By limiting how often people have to visit the DMV, reducing the amount of time each visit takes, and thinking strategically about how to move its computer systems into the future, I will bring efficiency and change to an agency that has frustrated people and defied politicians for decades – saving Connecticut money and saving our residents time. I have an eight-step plan to improve our system:

LESS TIME AT THE DMV

- **Extend Licenses and Registrations**

The simplest and most cost-effective way to improve your interactions with the DMV is to reduce your interactions with the DMV. Although many states allow their residents to go eight years between new licenses, our legislature recently refused to extend Connecticut licenses beyond six years. I'll extend the length of your license by a third. I'll also extend the length of your registration by half, to three years – the length of most car leases – instead of two. Those changes will decrease visits and improve wait times for everyone.

- **Transform Customer-Facing Processes**

We've all been there – you wait in line for an hour only to be placed in a second one to fill out another form, and then another. You get in line, take a number, sit-down, only to stand back up, show your paperwork, and sit down again to wait for another window. There are simply too many steps in the process for customers – and the sheer number of steps within a branch to complete a single transaction results in a poor customer experience full of confusion and frustration. It's driving up wait times. I will charge the commissioner with cutting out unnecessary bureaucratic steps, revamping processes so that they're simple and straightforward, and making sure staff are trained to use any new software up front, rather than having to learn it on the fly.

- **Open New DMV Express Centers**

Connecticut residents shouldn't have to go to a DMV location for simple services. Until recently, they didn't have to: AAA offices across the state processed hundreds of thousands of annual renewals. Since the Fairfield and New Haven County offices severed ties with the DMV, wait times have spiked. One proven solution is making better use of an existing resource: our 169 town halls. By opening DMV Express Centers staffed by experienced DMV employees in twenty of those halls and by deploying kiosks to additional businesses, we'll provide simple, effective services to residents across the state and reduce lines inside agency branches at a relatively low cost.

- **Create New Regional DMV Supercenters**

As we open local centers across the state, we also need to tear apart service-as-usual and completely reinvent, rethink, and revamp the way the DMV flagship branches do business. Right now, there are 8 hub offices, 5 limited service locations, three appointment-only offices, and one "other service" location. That means we have 17 locations with varying and limited degrees of service. Instead, we need to modernize our hub offices into new supercenters, well served

by public transportation, that are thoughtfully designed, equipped, and staffed to offer a best-in-class customer experience – during business hours convenient for those customers. That will streamline service provision and save money down the line.

BRING THE DMV INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

- **Introduce Modern, Customer-Facing Technology**

Modern conveniences perfected in other states, and by banks and other private companies, need to be introduced across the Connecticut DMV. That begins with everyday expectations like remote renewals so that residents will rarely need to visit a branch in person. It includes more pioneering customer-centered technologies, like a recent Louisiana program that allows residents of that state to carry a validated digital copy of their license on their phones and tablets. And it ends with a better experience for every DMV customer in the state. We also need to publicize which services are currently available online, because one in every three DMV visitors is there to accomplish an errand that can already be done remotely.

- **Overhaul Software Platforms**

It's not just our customer-facing software that's fallen behind the times. DMV computers rely on a decades-old mainframe and a patchwork of other systems that cause glitches, create inefficiencies, and waste time. We need to modernize and integrate those systems to provide a seamless customer experience and 21st-century services to Connecticut residents. That's why I will complete the long-standing project to overhaul the DMV's software.

ACCOUNTABILITY

- **Strengthen Outside Contracts**

The last time the DMV tried to modernize its systems, Connecticut residents spent \$26 million on a lemon. 3M, the company hired to do the job, didn't live up to its end of the bargain. As a result, wait times spiked, registrations were cancelled, and confusion ensued. We need stronger clawback standards on the books and in our contracts so that taxpayers know their money is being well-spent on quality services – and that their money will be returned if companies don't follow through on their promises. In the middle of a fiscal crisis, we cannot let vendors get away with doing a poor job or find ourselves in prolonged legal battles over shoddy service. Instead, we need to be clear that if you want to do business with the State of Connecticut, we expect best-in-class service – and our money back if we don't get it. We also need to ensure we have full and instant access to the code written by the vendors we hire.

- **A Top-To-Bottom Review Aimed At Cutting Fees and Saving Dollars**

The DMV should not make Connecticut residents stand in line all day, and then make them pay some of the country's highest fees for driver's licenses, road testing, and other services. I commit to a thorough review of the fees at the DMV and to making sure that fees for non-commercial services like driver's licenses are no more than the regional average. Non-driver photo IDs, which are required to unlock so many public and private services, should be free to all our residents. And we should incentivize improved performance by allowing anyone forced to wait an undue amount of time for a straightforward service to get what they came for without paying a dime.

Fixing the DMV is about more than respecting our residents' time. It's about restoring their confidence in government. I will do both – and then I will take the lessons we learn streamlining the DMV and roll them out to other state service providers that also subject residents to undue delays.