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In August, Blue Ridge announced that internet speeds were rising for commercial customers, and now they have significantly increased residential internet speeds everywhere. "The capital investments that we continue to make in our network and infrastructure make this enhancement possible, and we are just getting started," said Mark Masenheimer, Vice President of Operations for Blue Ridge.

Today's consumer wants choice, speed, reliability, and value, and Blue Ridge is delivering. For example, current customers that subscribe to the popular speed tier G30, and have the correct modem equipment, will see their download speed more than double to 75Mbps and their upload speed double from 3Mbps to 6Mbps. To receive these new speeds, some customers may need to upgrade their modems. Blue Ridge only installs Docsis 3.1 modems now. They are available for customers to purchase for \$79.95 or can be rented for \$5.95/month. Blue Ridge will be emailing customers outlining the specifics of this exciting change, including information on if a modem upgrade is recommended for their accounts. Customers that currently rent their device from Blue Ridge will, if required, receive a new Docsis 3.1 modem.

Customers that currently own a device that does not support the faster speeds will have a decision to make—keep the device they have and continue receiving their current speeds, or upgrade their equipment to receive the faster speeds. Monthly service pricing for internet speeds is unchanged at this time. "We've been aggressive and disciplined with our new product launches and enhancements this year; our customers are benefiting and there are more exciting changes planned for the future. This is a great time to be a Blue Ridge customer," Masenheimer concluded. — [Blue Ridge news release](#)

It's only taken 13 years, but [Pennsylvania is finally starting](#) to pre-qualify people for a new enhanced identification card. Congress adopted the Real ID Act in 2005, a post-9/11 measure meant to make the kind of work-arounds used by



terrorist hijackers obsolete through increased precaution and security. But in Pennsylvania, Harrisburg bristled and blustered. No, they wouldn't do it. Nope, nope, nope. Seven years into the new law, the state Legislature responded with a document of its own, when the Real ID Nonparticipation Act gave the feds a resounding "nuh-uh."

That came in 2012, a year after the 10th anniversary of the day seven crew members and 33 passengers, along with four hijackers, died in a Pennsylvania field. Gov. Tom Wolf finally signed the law that allowed the state to participate in 2017. As each deadline in the Real ID process has come up, Pennsylvania has lagged behind like a whiny kid who forgot his homework. There isn't enough time, the state has cried.

That's still the mantra now. While the standards are supposed to go into effect in the Keystone State in a month, once again, an extension has been requested. The \$30 optional IDs won't actually be available until March. Without the IDs, Pennsylvanians will eventually not be able to access spaces under federal protection, like U.S. courthouses or airplanes.

Pennsylvania is not alone. While 33 states and areas are listed by the Department of Homeland Security as compliant, there are 18 states and five territories that aren't. All are listed as having extensions. Many of those joined Pennsylvania in opposition. But of those 55 states and places, Pennsylvania has the distinction of being the home to a graveyard-shrine that speaks to why the law exists. Only two other states can say that. New York is compliant. So is the District of Columbia.

New Jersey, where fateful Flight 93 took off on Sept. 11, 2001, is also still amid extensions following a restraining order and legal challenge from the ACLU. Massachusetts, too, has extensions. The planes that hit the World Trade Center took off from Boston's Logan International Airport. The Real ID Act has not been without controversy and criticism, which has come from Republicans, Democrats, liberals and libertarians alike, for a spectrum of reasons from privacy to constitutionality.

But Pennsylvania's years of foot-dragging, at the same time it was legislating voter identification requirements, seems oddly discordant. What seems fitting, however, is that the pre-qualifying process begins as the Tower of Voices is set to be dedicated at the Flight 93 National Memorial. Maybe some voices were finally heard. — **Pittsburgh Tribune-Review editorial**



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