



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on March 26, 2015

Congress Pushes Obama-backed National Biometric ID for Americans

After largely failing to prod state governments into developing a national identification system known as “REAL ID,” Republican lawmakers in Congress are [once again pushing an Obama-backed scheme](#) that would force every American to have a national ID card containing sensitive biometric data. The controversial plan, embedded in an immigration-enforcement bill, has been in the works for years, but has consistently been met with stiff opposition from liberty-minded grassroots organizations and activists. While the plan has failed in previous Congresses thanks to a groundswell of opposition, critics of the measure say that without prompt action, the unconstitutional scheme could soon become a reality.



The legislation, officially dubbed the “[Legal Workforce Act](#)” (H.R. 1147), is ostensibly aimed at preventing illegal immigrants from obtaining jobs in the United States. Among the most troubling elements highlighted by critics, though, is that the bill would purport to mandate a national ID card for every American as a condition of working. It would also force every employer in America to purchase and use so-called “E-Verify technology” to check with Washington, D.C., as to whether potential employees have government permission to work. Finally, it would create a massive federal database containing sensitive data on virtually every person in the country — a database that could easily be expanded to include even more information.

While establishment lawmakers on both sides of the aisle seem fond of the measure, critics are sounding the alarm about the bill and its implications for liberty. In an e-mail to supporters urging them to help crush the unconstitutional legislation, for example, former Congressman Ron Paul (R-Texas), in his capacity as chairman of Campaign for Liberty, warned that the national ID scheme would be a nightmare. Among other concerns, the two-time GOP presidential contender noted that it would allow federal bureaucrats to include biometric information — potentially including fingerprints, retinal scans, and more — that could and likely would be eventually used as a tracking device. It would also make it illegal for anyone to work in the United States without obtaining the national ID.

“Every time any citizen applies for a job, the government would know — and you can bet its only a matter of time until ‘ID scans’ will be required to make even routine purchases, as well,” Dr. Paul [warned](#), adding that “statists in both parties have been fighting to ram their radical national ID-database scheme into law” for years. “In fact, this scheme was a key portion of the infamous so-called ‘Comprehensive Immigration Reform’ bills both parties have tried to ram through.” Now, Paul said, the statists believe they have found a way to impose their national ID: Drop the amnesty provisions and



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focus on immigration “security.”

According to Dr. Paul, a constitutionalist who served in Congress for more than 20 years, the term “security” is being used as “nothing more than a buzzword meant to trick Americans from all over the country into thinking that Congress is finally going to seal our southern border.” In reality, though, it means something much different. “The ‘security’ members of both parties in the U.S. House want doesn’t target any U.S. border,” Paul added. “Instead, it’s meant to create an all-out police state within them.”

Paul also warned that the national database required for the ID regime could easily expand to include information on gun ownership, medical records, political affiliation, and “virtually anything else at the stroke of a President’s pen.” In fact, the stakes are so high, he said, that this type of battle is often decisive in “whether a country remains free or continues sliding toward tyranny.” Existing abuses such as lawless NSA spying, IRS harassment, and more offer further evidence that the feds cannot be trusted with such Orwellian tools to track, monitor, and ultimately control Americans.

Despite the dangers, the legislation has already been passed out of the House Judiciary Committee, getting a vote just three days after it was introduced — and the markup took place before the text of the bill was even available online. “The speed with which this bill was rushed through Committee means the House leadership is very serious about passing this bill into law as soon as possible,” warned Paul, urging Americans to fight back immediately to prevent the bill from passing. He also warned about potential “bipartisan compromises” that could be even worse than the original.

The legislation was introduced by Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Texas), who has a [dismal 54 percent in the Freedom Index](#), a tool provided by this magazine that scores lawmakers’ votes based on adherence to the U.S. Constitution they all swore to uphold. The controversial bill already has dozens of co-sponsors in the House, too. It is being publicly touted by Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.), who claimed it would bring the “nation’s employment eligibility system into the 21st century,” as well as chief sponsor Smith.

“The Legal Workforce Act turns off the jobs magnet that attracts so many illegal immigrants to the United States,” Rep. Smith said in a statement promoting the measure, ignoring the fact that amnesty and the porous borders have been crucial in encouraging illegal immigration. “The bill expands the E-Verify system and applies it to all U.S. employers. Equally important, the American people support E-Verify,” Smith argued, citing polls showing that Americans overwhelmingly support stronger laws to stop businesses from hiring illegal immigrants. “This bill is a common-sense approach that will reduce illegal immigration and save jobs for legal workers. It deserves the support of everyone who wants to put the interests of American workers first.”

The bill also has the support of several major lobbying powerhouses — including some, such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, that are infamous for their support of granting amnesty to illegal immigrants. Other organizations backing the bill include immigration enforcement-focused Numbers USA, the National Restaurant Association, the National Association of Homebuilders, and several others. However, in the past, similar national-ID schemes have met with major opposition from groups including Downsize DC, the Rutherford Institute, the American Policy Center, the Taxpayers Protection Alliance, the Republican Liberty Caucus, the U.S. Bill of Rights Foundation, Conservative Republican Women, and many more.

In a [letter to lawmakers](#) about the same legislation in the 112th Congress (2011-2012), that broad



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coalition of organizations blasted the bill as an affront to freedom and the Constitution. Among other concerns, they said it “violates individual civil liberties such as the right to work and free speech; mandates a costly job-killing regulatory burden that cripples small business; requires employers to become enforcement agents of the federal government; and encourages identify theft of law-abiding citizens.” The bill should never have even left committee, according to opponents.

“It is anathema to limited government, the right to privacy, free enterprise and prosperity,” the coalition said in the letter to members of Congress. “It violates the philosophy of the Constitution and intent of the Framers by subordinating the liberty of citizens to the administrative convenience of government. And the Founding Fathers would have rebelled against such a staggering Federal intrusion into every workplace in the nation and our personal civil liberties.”

As *The New American* [reported](#) as far back as 2010, the same plot to impose a national ID on America has been pushed before by some of the leading Big Government-mongers in Congress. The “bipartisan” amnesty-national ID legislation pushed by Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) and backed by Obama in 2010 eventually failed due to a massive uprising against legalizing illegal immigrants. Back then, though, promoters of the biometric national ID scheme were boasting about their machinations.

“Our plan has four pillars: requiring biometric Social Security cards to ensure that illegal workers cannot get jobs; fulfilling and strengthening our commitments on border security and interior enforcement; creating a process for admitting temporary workers; and implementing a tough but fair path to legalization for those already here,” wrote Graham and Schumer in a joint op-ed promoting their legislation. “We would require all U.S. citizens and legal immigrants who want jobs to obtain a high-tech, fraud-proof Social Security card.” At the time, Obama called the proposal “a promising, bipartisan framework which can and should be the basis for moving forward.”

With the amnesty provision now out of the more recent bill — Obama is using executive decrees funded by the GOP Congress in a bid to provide amnesty anyway — analysts say the national ID plot stands a much greater chance of coming to fruition. In addition to being unconstitutional by virtue of the fact that the Constitution grants no power over identification systems to the federal government, history shows that national ID schemes are dangerous and very often abused by authorities. Considering the U.S. government’s track record, Americans can be sure that, if the plot becomes law, the ID regime will be eventually be abused as well.

If solving the illegal immigration crisis is truly the goal, there is a much simpler solution. Rather than foisting an unconstitutional national ID scheme on Americans and building a massive database, Congress could stop funding Obama’s amnesty decrees and ensure that the borders are secure. For that to happen, though, Americans who value liberty and the Constitution must get involved.

Alex Newman is a correspondent for The New American, covering economics, education, politics, and more. Follow him on Twitter [@ALEXNEWMAN_JOU](#). He can be reached at anewman@thenewamerican.com

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