



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on December 6, 2016

Obama USCIS Did Not Run FBI Name Checks on Immigration Applicants

House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.), shown in suit, issued a press release on December 2 noting that the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) had identified problems with the background system used to vet immigration benefits applicants and that proper background checks have not been run on some applications.



As his source, Goodlatte cited an e-mail that the USCIS associate director for the field operations directorate sent to agency staff on November 29. In that e-mail, the associate director stated that “an issue had been identified with the key background system used to vet immigration benefits applicants and that proper background checks have not been run on certain applications.”

Goodlatte included a copy of a letter he sent to Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson in his release, in which he addressed the apparent lack of ability of USCIS to ensure the completion of background checks for foreign nationals seeking immigration benefits prior to the approval of immigration benefits applications.

In his letter, Goodlatte quoted from the e-mail sent by the USCIS associate director to the agency’s officials: “We have identified an issue with FBI Name Checks initiated through ELIS [the Electronic Immigration System]. At this point we are not confident that proper FBI Name Checks have been run on certain ELIS cases. At this point we are uncertain of the scope of the problem.”

Goodlatte reminded Johnson that the FBI Name Check process is an “integral and absolutely necessary part of the immigration benefits” process and said that no applicant should be approved prior to such a check being completed.

Goodlatte expressed obvious dissatisfaction with the way this breach of protocol had been handled, stating:

I am troubled by the fact that as the Chairman of the Committee of jurisdiction over USCIS, I was not informed about this epic USCIS failure to ensure that immigration benefits applicants were properly vetted as required by law. Your agency made no effort to notify me of this problem. Instead, I was only made aware of it by a confidential source. As such, I request a briefing from USCIS and DHS officials as to the current and any prior concerns with ELIS regarding background checks.



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Continuing, Goodlatte asked Johnson to answer 10 questions about the ELIS failure to run FBI Name Checks on naturalization cases, asking for specific figures pertaining to the number of times the requisite background checks were not made. He also asked for accurate information concerning the number of immigrants who had been naturalized without having the proper background checks run, as well as what steps would be taken to ensure the *denaturalization* proceedings for those individuals who are found to have been improperly naturalized.

Goodlatte asked Johnson to respond to his questions by December 9.

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