



Search

Advanced Search



Editions

Services | Database | Markets | Weather | Site Index | RSS | Feedback

Global Edition | China | World | Business | Culture & Edu | Sports | Entertainment | Science & Technology | Health | Travel | Odd News | In-Depth

# World

Most Searched: •Chile •Taliban •Haiti quake •Climate •Yemen

## U.S. civil liberty advocates raise eyebrows at worker ID plan

English.news.cn 2010-03-16 12:29:24

Feedback | Print | RSS | RSS | RSS

By Matthew Rusing

WASHINGTON, March 15 (Xinhua) -- Civil libertarians in the United States are raising eyebrows over a plan to implement worker ID cards that lawmakers said would prevent businesses from hiring illegal immigrants.

Opponents said the cards mark the latest episode of an ongoing trend of increasing government intrusiveness that began with the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on Washington and New York.

Under the plan, carrying the card would be mandatory for all U.S. citizens and applying for a job would mean presenting it to an employer. The card would contain biometric information, such as fingerprints or an electronic scan of veins on the card holder's hands.

Sens. Chuck Schumer, D-NY, and Lindsey Graham, R-SC, are pushing the plan.

"We've all got Social Security cards. They're just easily tampered with. Make them tamper proof. That's all I'm saying," Graham told the Wall Street Journal.

While a system called E-Verify already exists to enable employers to check whether employees can legally work in the United States, Schumer told the Journal the system was ineffective and that he believed his plan would work better.

Schumer wrote in his 2007 book "Positively American" that the card would make it easier for employers to avoid hiring illegal immigrants and lead to a dearth of jobs for undocumented workers that would ultimately stop illegal immigration.

But critics said the plan amounted to the implementation of a national ID card, a concept many Americans view with a suspicious eye and at odds with opponents' view of the proper role of government.

Chris Calabrese, legislative council at the American Civil Liberties Union, said in a statement that the card could wrongly disqualify workers from obtaining employment because of mistakes in government databases, problems with fingerprints or the equipment that reads them. Not being able to compile the necessary documentation in time could also cost workers a job.

Civil libertarians also contend the push for the card marks the latest in a long list of what they view as increasing government invasiveness. One of many additional examples is the Combined DNA Index System, a database that collects DNA information, said Jim Harper, policy analyst at the Cato Institute.

The database began as a collection point for the names of those who have been convicted of serious, violent crimes, but later morphed into a database in which the names of those who have committed less serious crimes are catalogued, he noted.

And in the realm of national security, warrantless wiretapping, which began under the Bush administration, continues under the administration of President Barack Obama, he noted.

The attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 played a significant role in public acceptance of what some call increased government curtailing of individual liberties, to which people are ready to agree if they

### Video >>



Palestinians clash with Israeli troops



Eurogroup endorses Greek austerity measures

### Photos >>



Thousands in Gaza protest Israel's action in E. Jerusalem



UK embassy confirms recovery of abducted boy in Pakistan

### Top World News

### Latest World News

- 1 Thai Red shirts pour blood in front of Gov't House
- 2 U.S. special envoy George Mitchell postpones Mideast tour
- 3 Thousands in Gaza protest Israel's action in E. Jerusalem
- 4 UK embassy confirms recovery of abducted boy in Pakistan
- 5 Russian State Duma might block the new START treaty: speaker

### Special Reports >>



8.8 magnitude quake hits Chile



Devastating Earthquake Rocks Haiti

think the measures make them safer, some civil libertarians contend.

"That has got a lot of people willing to accept supposed security measures much more than they would in the past," he said.

But opponents of the workers ID card said this time was different, and that Sens. Graham and Schumer would be hard pressed to pass their legislation, as it would elicit the most criticism from those they were targeting for support -- conservatives with an anti illegal immigration streak.

"The people who worry about illegal immigrants are the same people that hate the idea of a national ID card," said James Carafano, policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation, a think tank.

Proponents said it was not unlike providing biometrics information to obtain a drivers license or passport. But critics countered that obtaining those documents was a voluntary action.

"People are really going to see that as a step over the line -- that in order to have a job in America you have to register with the government," Carafano said.

A number of countries worldwide require citizens to hold national identity cards or booklets, although not all require the holder to carry the document on their person.

Harper said that Sen. Schumer believed the loudest conservatives and tea partiers were the audience that was most important to galvanize. While many conservatives have voiced strong disapproval of illegal immigration, many others of the same political leaning would be strongly opposed to a worker ID card.

"I think it's a real miscalculation about where the country is with a national ID," he said.

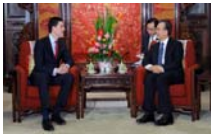
Editor: Helen Mo

Related News

Home >> World

Feedback | Print | RSS | RSS | [Icons]

Photos >>



Chinese premier, British foreign secretary underline free trade



Thai Red shirts pour blood in front of Gov't House



Eurogroup endorses Greek austerity measures, offering no bailout plan



13 China colleges to offer anti-smoking courses



Beckham's surgery completed



Oscar-winner Kate Winslet splits from director husband



Babies inborn to response to music



Quitting smoking improves artery health

**Most Popular**

**We Recommend**

**Top News >>**

- 1 Chinese vice premier urges U.S. to respect China's core interests
- 2 Massive power cut hits Chile
- 3 Investigation says Toyota Prius incident not duplicable
- 4 HP "quality complaint", sign of China's growing awareness of consumer rights
- 5 Blood to be poured around Thai Gov't House: protestor

- Thai PM working as usual amid continued mass rally
- Iran says sanctions not to be effective
- Russian State Duma might block new START treaty: speaker
- Clashes rock East Jerusalem, gloom peace prospect
- Thai Red shirts pour blood in front of Gov't House

**Back to Top**

[Home](#) | [China](#) | [World](#) | [Business](#) | [In Depth](#) | [Culture & Edu](#) | [Sports](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Science](#) | [Health](#) | [Travel](#) | [Odd](#) | [Photos](#) | [Video](#) | [Special Reports](#)  
[Gov.cn](#) | [About China](#) | [About Us](#) | [Services](#) | [Site Map](#) | [RSS](#) | [Weekly Review](#)

Copyright © 2000-2010 Xinhua News Agency. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited.