



For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
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Fact Sheet: Basic Pilot: A Clear and Reliable Way to Verify Employment Eligibility

[In Focus: Immigration](#)

"Part of a comprehensive immigration plan is to give employers the tools necessary to determine whether or not the workers they're looking for are here legally in America. And we've got such a plan - Basic Pilot, it's called. It's working."

- President George W. Bush, 7/5/06

Today, President Bush Visited A Dunkin' Donuts Store To Highlight The Basic Pilot Program And The Need For Comprehensive Immigration Reform. Dunkin' Brands Inc. recently announced it will require all of its franchisees to participate in the Basic Pilot program, which helps employers verify employment eligibility. Dunkin' Brands voluntarily signed up for the program because of the difficulty employers face when trying to screen the work eligibility of new hires.

The Basic Pilot Program Is Helping Businesses Comply With The Law. Basic Pilot is a voluntary, online verification system that allows employers to confirm the eligibility of new hires by checking the personal information they provide against Federal databases.

- **When President Bush Took Office, Basic Pilot Was Available In Only Six States, And Today It Is Available Nationwide.**
- **President Bush Has Called On Congress To Make Basic Pilot Mandatory And Provide The Department Of Homeland Security (DHS) With The Funding And Authority To Make Sure It Is An Effective Tool To Prevent The Hiring Of Illegal Workers.** Basic Pilot is still optional, and most employers do not participate. Both the House and Senate immigration bills would require employers to use Basic Pilot. The President's FY07 budget requests \$111 million to expand Basic Pilot for more employers to make use of the program.

President Bush Is Committed To Comprehensive Immigration Reform

All Elements Of Immigration Reform Must Be Addressed Together. The five objectives of comprehensive immigration reform are securing our borders, creating a temporary worker program, making it easier for employers to verify employment eligibility and continuing to hold them to account for the legal status of workers they hire, dealing with the millions of illegal immigrants who are already here, and honoring the great American tradition of the melting pot.

- **President Bush Is Continuing To Work With Congress To Produce A Comprehensive Immigration Reform Bill.** The House started this process by passing a bill that focuses on border security and interior enforcement. The Senate has passed a comprehensive bill that also includes a temporary worker program and a plan to resolve the status of illegal immigrants who are already in our country. Working out the differences between the House and Senate bills will require effort and compromise on both sides. Yet the difficulty of this task is no excuse for avoiding it.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform Must Hold Employers To Account For The Workers They Hire

Funding For Immigration Enforcement Has Increased By 42 Percent Since The President Took Office.

- **Last Year, The President Signed A Bill Doubling Federal Resources For Worksite Enforcement.** The Administration's FY07 budget request seeks \$41.7 million in new funds and 171 additional agents to strengthen Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) worksite enforcement efforts.

To Help Combat Document Fraud, President Bush Has Proposed The Creation Of A New Identification Card For Every Legal Foreign Worker. This card should use biometric technology, such as digital fingerprints, to help make it tamper-proof. With a tamper-proof card, American employers would know that a foreign job applicant is who he says he is - and is in our country legally. A tamper-proof card would be a vital tool to enforce the law, and it must be part of any comprehensive immigration reform.

- **Improving Enforcement Of Our Immigration Laws Also Requires Stiffening The Penalties For Violating Those Laws.** President Bush proposes to increase penalties for employers who violate the law - and to make fines even larger for employers who repeatedly violate the law.

DHS Recently Proposed Its "No-Match" Regulation To Clarify Employers' Obligations In Resolving Questions Regarding Employment Eligibility And To Help The Government Crack Down On Those Employers Who Knowingly Hire Illegal Workers. Millions of Social Security numbers provided by employers do not match the information in the Social Security Administration's (SSA) databases. In some cases when an employer has ten or more employees with inaccurate information, the SSA sends the employer a "no-match" letter. DHS's proposed "no-match" regulation outlines clear steps that employers can take in reaction to these letters. This regulation would also create a safe harbor for employers who undertake good faith efforts to verify their employees' eligibility.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform Must Create A Temporary Worker Program That Helps Us Secure The Border

A Temporary Worker Program Would Create A Legal Path For Foreign Workers To Enter Our Country In An Orderly Way, For A Limited Period Of Time. A temporary worker program would add to our security by making certain we know who is in our country and why they are here.

A Temporary Worker Program Would Meet The Legitimate Needs Of American Employers, And It Would Give Honest Immigrants A Way To Provide For Their Families While Respecting The Law.

The Bush Administration's Worksite Enforcement Efforts

ICE Has Adopted An Aggressive Approach Toward Cracking Down On Employers Who Knowingly Hire Illegal Aliens. ICE has replaced the old system of administrative hearings and fines with a much tougher combination of criminal prosecutions and asset forfeitures. ICE is conducting far more criminal investigations than the former Immigration and Naturalization Service, which tended to rely on administrative fines as a sanction.

Arrests For Criminal Violations Brought In Worksite Enforcement Actions - The Most Effective Means Of Enforcement And Best Measure Of ICE's New Approach - Have Increased Significantly. These criminal arrests have increased from 24 in FY99, to 160 in FY04, to 176 in FY05, and to a record 382 so far this fiscal year. The number of indictments and criminal convictions has also increased.

- **In April, ICE Carried Out The Largest Single Worksite Enforcement Action Ever Taken Against An Employer.** Seven current and former managers of IFCO Systems North America were charged with harboring aliens and document fraud, and 1,187 unlawfully employed illegal aliens were arrested.
- **From October 2005 Through March 2006, ICE Arrested More Than 2,100 Unlawfully Employed Illegal Aliens As A Result Of Worksite Enforcement Investigations.** ICE also seized millions of dollars in cash and assets from employers.
- **Last Year, Federal Agents Completed Operation Rollback, Which Resulted In The Largest Worksite Enforcement Penalty In U.S. History.** Operation Rollback also resulted in the arrest of hundreds of illegal immigrants and criminal convictions against a dozen employers. The \$15 million settlement and forfeiture resulting from Operation Rollback is greater than the combined sum of all

administrative fines from the previous eight years.

DHS Is Focusing Enforcement Efforts On Locating And Removing Criminal Aliens, Building Strong Worksite Compliance Programs To Deter Illegal Employment, And Uprooting The Criminal Infrastructure That Supports Illegal Migration.

- **In May And June, ICE Apprehended More Than 2,100 Criminal Aliens, Gang Members, Fugitives, And Other Immigration Violators In A Nationwide Interior Enforcement Operation Dubbed "Operation Return To Sender."** Among the roughly 2,179 individuals arrested in the operation, roughly half had criminal records for crimes that ranged from sexual assault of a minor to assault with a deadly weapon. Roughly 367 of the arrested aliens were members or associates of violent street gangs and 640 were fugitive aliens who had been issued final orders of removal by an immigration judge but failed to comply.
- **Last Week, ICE Arrested 22 Illegal Alien Workers From An Engineering Company That Provides Contract Services To Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base.** According to investigators, the majority of the company's unauthorized workers used fraudulent social security and alien registration numbers to complete the required forms to obtain their jobs. While there is no evidence that any of the employees had terrorist ties, unauthorized workers with access to security sensitive sites are potentially vulnerable to exploitation by terrorists, smugglers, traffickers, or other criminals.
- **Since March 2003, ICE Fugitive Operations Teams Have Arrested More Than 42,000 Aliens, 31,000 Of Which Were Fugitives.**
- **Since May 2002, An ICE Document And Benefit Fraud Task Force Initiative Targeting The Washington, DC, Area, Operation Card Shark, Has Shut Down Seven Fraudulent Document "Mills," Seized Approximately 10,000 Documents With An Estimated Value Of Over \$1 Million, Apprehended 195 Aliens, And Prosecuted 60 Individuals.**
- **Since 2001, The Number Of ICE Immigration Investigators Has Increased By 25 Percent.**
- **ICE Has Expanded Its Fugitive Operations Teams From 35 To 52 In 2006, And The President's FY07 Budget Seeks Funding To Increase That Number To A Total Of 70 Teams.**

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