



For Immediate Release  
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## Immigration Fact Check: Responding to Key Myths

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### **1. MYTH: A comprehensive approach to immigration reform is not necessary.**

- **FACT:** Mass deportation is not a workable solution. Deporting the millions of illegal immigrants who are already in the country would be impractical, harmful to our economy, and potentially devastating to families with deep roots in their communities.
- **FACT:** Keeping our Nation secure requires bringing the estimated 12 million illegal immigrants already here out of the shadows and into a regulated system. This will allow law enforcement officials to know who is in the country and allow immigration enforcement officers to focus their resources on finding and apprehending violent criminals and terrorists who want to stay hidden from the law.
- **FACT:** To help meet the needs of our growing economy, there must be a lawful and orderly channel for foreign workers to fill jobs that Americans are not doing. Current enforcement, while necessary to uphold the rule of law, is leaving farmers without workers to pick their crops.
- **FACT:** A temporary worker program will give immigrants trying to support their families a legal way to find employment, thus reducing pressure on the border. This will allow Border Patrol and immigration enforcement agents to focus on those entering the country illegally with the intent of doing our Nation harm.

### **2. MYTH: The Administration is not enforcing current immigration law.**

- **FACT:** In FY 2006, the Border Patrol caught and sent back nearly 1.2 million illegal immigrants. So far in FY 2007, more than 600,000 illegal immigrants have been removed.
- **FACT:** As a result of the Administration's increased investment in border security and other deterrence factors, the number of people apprehended illegally crossing our Southern border is down by more than 25 percent.
  - Since the President took office in 2001, the Administration has more than doubled funding for border security – from \$4.6 billion in 2001 to \$10.4 billion in 2007.
  - The Administration has expanded the Border Patrol from approximately 9,000 agents in 2001 to more than 13,000 agents today. By the end of 2008, there will be a total of more than 18,000 agents, doubling the size of the Border Patrol under the President's leadership.
  - In addition to thousands of ground sensors, hundreds of cameras, more than 350 miles of improved patrol roads, and 78 miles of permanent vehicle barriers, there are 86 miles of primary fencing now in place at the Southern border, part of 370 miles planned by the end of 2008.
- **FACT:** Arrests for criminal violations brought in worksite enforcement actions have increased from 49 in FY 2000 to a record 716 in FY 2006 – a nearly 15-fold increase.
- **FACT:** During the first half of FY 2007, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) obtained criminal fines, restitution, and civil judgments in worksite enforcement investigations against egregious violators in excess of \$29 million.
- **FACT:** ICE established the Fugitive Operations Program to eliminate the Nation's backlog of immigration fugitives. Today, there are 61 fugitive operations teams nationwide, up from 15 in 2005. ICE expects to expand this number to 75 by the end of the year.
- **FACT:** The Administration has effectively ended the practice of "Catch and Release" at the Southern border. To help sustain this, the Administration has provided funding for 7,798 new beds to accommodate apprehended illegal immigrants – a 40 percent increase over 2001.

### **3. MYTH: The preliminary background checks required for illegal immigrants to gain probationary legal status are insufficient.**

- **FACT:** In order to obtain probationary status, undocumented workers must come out of the shadows, acknowledge they have broken the law, and pass a preliminary background check. There is a provision in the bill that says the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) should grant probationary status unless it has found a "disqualifying factor" by the end of the next business day, but applicants will undergo significant scrutiny in that time, as four components of the five-layered background check almost always generate answers within 24 hours. As a general rule:
  - The DHS Interagency Border Inspection System check is effectively immediate.
  - The DHS immigration records check is effectively immediate.
  - The biometrics check against DHS's Automated Biometric Identification System (IDENT) is completed within 24 hours.
  - The biometrics check against the FBI's Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS) is completed within 24 hours.
- **FACT:** In general, the only component of the background check that sometimes takes longer than 24 hours is the FBI Name Check. Of these, 68 percent are returned within 48 hours.
- **FACT:** Any portion of the background check that remains incomplete after 24 hours will continue during the probationary period. Probationary status must be revoked at any time if a worker is found ineligible for the Z visa, fails to maintain a clean record, or fails the background check required for obtaining a Z visa.
- **FACT:** No Z visas will be awarded until all appropriate background checks begun during the probationary period are completed to the satisfaction of the Homeland Security Secretary.
- **FACT:** Creating a mechanism to bring illegal workers with clean records out of the shadows will enhance our national security by letting enforcement officials know who is in the country and why they are here. This is far preferable to the status quo, under which millions of illegal workers live outside the recognition of the law.

### **4. MYTH: The Employee Eligibility Verification System (EEVS) required under the bill will create a vast government database containing extraordinary amounts of information.**

- **FACT:** EEVS is first and foremost a verification service that bounces queries against existing databases to confirm data.
- **FACT:** The data currently retained by EEVS includes only the worker's name, date of birth, Social Security number, citizenship status/work authorization, and place of employment.
- **FACT:** The bill specifically requires the Homeland Security Department, in consultation with the Social Security Administration and other Federal and State agencies, to develop policies and procedures to ensure protection of this information. It further mandates that DHS's Chief Privacy Officer conduct regular audits of these policies.

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