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The federal work authorization verification programs are of dubious utility as immigration enforcement tools

- **Basic Pilot can only be as effective as an immigration enforcement tool as the information contained in the databases maintained by the SSA and DHS is accurate.** In many cases, however, this information is inaccurate and outdated. The Social Security Administration has estimated that *17.8 million of its records contain discrepancies* related to name, date of birth, or citizenship status and that over ten percent of the records belonging to noncitizens in its databases contain discrepancies. A 2004 DHS evaluation of the Basic Pilot program noted that SSA is able to automatically verify the authorization of less than 50 percent of non-citizens who are in fact authorized to work and that CIS is able to automatically verify only 82.6 percent of work-authorized noncitizens.
- **The growing sophistication of identity theft rings is undermining Basic Pilot's ability to accurately verify employment authorization.** The GAO's 2005 evaluation of Basic Pilot noted that *"various studies have shown that document fraud (use of counterfeit documents) and identity fraud (fraudulent use of documents or information belonging to others) have made it difficult for employers who want to comply with the employment verification process to ensure that they hire only authorized workers and have made it easier for unscrupulous employers to knowingly hire unauthorized workers."* In December of 2006, ICE officers raided several meat-packing plants owned by Swift & Company, resulting in the arrest of 1,282 individuals on immigration charges and another 65 others on criminal charges. Ironically, Swift and Company had voluntarily verified the work authorization of all of these employees using the Basic Pilot program.

Federal work authorization programs violate the privacy rights of all American workers

- **Even the Heritage Foundation recognizes that Basic Pilot represents a threat to the privacy rights of Americans.** In 2006, James Jay Carafano wrote that the Basic Pilot program would "run afoul of legitimate privacy concerns. Both the government and employers would have access to massive databases of information, which would surely tempt some to traffic in identity theft."
- **A 2002 Temple University and Westat study found that employers who participated in Basic Pilot were failing to protect workers' privacy.** Of the employers surveyed, 62.8 percent did not keep the Basic Pilot computer in a locked room and just under half kept the program instructions in plain sight. Thirty percent of employers kept the password in an unsecured location and an astonishing ten percent kept the password in plain view. Furthermore, the study found that a user with only an intermediate understanding of computers could access a file stored on the employer's computer in order to access the necessary username and password.