



Marsha Blackburn

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TN-7

Press Contact: Ryan Loskarn
ryan.loskarn@mail.house.gov
202-225-3466/202-225-1112

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, March 31, 2004

BLACKBURN INTRODUCES BILL TO SAFEGUARD HOMELAND SECURITY, TAXPAYER DOLLARS

Legislation Requires Citizenship Verification for Federal Contractors

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Representative Marsha Blackburn (TN-7th District) recently introduced the Federal Contractors Security Act, H.R. 4064, to improve enforcement of the nation's immigration laws and support homeland security efforts. The legislation would require federal contractors to use the Basic Worker Verification Program to authenticate the Social Security numbers presented by new employees. Contractors would not be required to pay any fees in order to validate employee information using this federal database.

"America must begin enforcing existing immigration laws," Blackburn said. "In a time when border security is an important part of our war on terrorism, there is no excuse for failing to screen employees. Currently there are illegal immigrants on the payrolls of federal contractors in high security areas. This legislation can put an end to both misuse of taxpayer dollars and violation of America's immigration policies."

In 1996, Congress created the Basic Worker Verification pilot program allowing employers to access both the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Social Security Administration databases to verify a potential employee's legal citizenship status. Employers operating in California, Florida, Illinois, Nebraska, New York and Texas currently participate in the program, and Congress passed legislation in November to expand coverage nationwide by the end of 2004. This legislation would require all federal contractors to utilize the citizenship verification system.

Recent news stories highlight the concerns to be addressed by H.R. 4064. In Texas a security firm hired an illegal immigrant to patrol the Houston immigration office as an armed guard despite the fact that the individual had a deportation order against him and was under investigation by the federal government. In San Diego, California, a Navy contractor was found to have a dozen illegal immigrants on staff with access to military installations and warships. A similar situation existed with a Colorado federal contractor and the U.S. Air Force Academy.

The Federal Contractors Security Act has eleven cosponsors in the House of Representatives. ###

