



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on January 11, 2018

ICE Raids 7-Eleven Stores; Arrests 21 Workers, 9 Managers

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents raided 98 7-Eleven stores before dawn on January 10 to interview employees suspected of being aliens working without the proper work permits. The raids took place in 17 states and the District of Columbia.

ICE said its agents made 21 arrests of aliens working without green cards, as well as nine 7-Eleven franchise owners and managers.



Derek Benner, acting head of ICE's Homeland Security Investigations, said that the audits were "the first of many" and "a harbinger of what's to come" for employers.

"This is what we're gearing up for this year and what you're going to see more and more of is these large-scale compliance inspections, just for starters," told The Associated Press.

"It's not going to be limited to large companies or any particular industry — big, medium and small," he said.

Once the inspections have taken place, officials plan to look at whether the cases warrant administrative action or criminal investigations, Benner told AP.

The 7-Eleven stores visited during the January 10 operations "will be required to produce documents showing they required work authorization," according to ICE. ICE said in a statement that the enforcement effort would "send a strong message" to employers to only hire documented workers.

"ICE will enforce the law, and if you are found to be breaking the law, you will be held accountable," Deputy Director Thomas Homan said in the statement quoted by the media. "Businesses that hire illegal workers are a pull factor for illegal immigration and we are working hard to remove this magnet. ICE will continue its efforts to protect jobs for American workers by eliminating unfair competitive advantages for companies that exploit illegal immigration."

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An ABC News report noted that in recent years these types of inspections, known as I-9 audit notices, have been less frequent, but ICE officials said that the January 10 visits are the start of more to come. (USCIS Form I-9 — officially called Employment Eligibility Verification — is the Department of Homeland Security form employers are required to fill out after inspecting work eligibility documents.) Over the past nine years, the peak year for such inspections was in 2013 with 3,127. There were only 1,360 I-9 inspections in fiscal year 2017.

Homan predicted the increase in the number of such raids last October in response to California's implementation of a sanctuary law. "ICE will have no choice but to conduct at-large arrests in local neighborhoods and at work sites, which will inevitably result in additional collateral arrests, instead of focusing on arrests at jails and prisons where transfers are safer for ICE officers and the community," said Homan.



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ABC News reported that 7-Eleven's corporate office in Irving, Texas, said it was aware of the ICE actions at the franchise locations, but that franchisees are "independent business owners and are solely responsible for their employees including deciding who to hire and verifying their eligibility to work in the United States."

A 7-Eleven statement released to the press said:

This means that all store associates in a franchised store are employees of the Franchisee and not 7-Eleven, Inc. As part of the 7-Eleven franchise agreement, 7-Eleven requires all franchise business owners to comply with all federal, state and local employment laws. This obligation requires 7-Eleven franchisees to verify work eligibility in the US for all of their prospective employees prior to hiring. 7-Eleven takes compliance with immigration laws seriously and has terminated the franchise agreements of franchisees convicted of violating these laws.

A report on the ICE raids in the *Washington Post* observed that supporters of tougher immigration enforcement want to require all employers to use the government's E-Verify system, which checks employees' I-9 employment eligibility forms, social security numbers, and other identifying information against federal databases. The report correctly noted, however, that critics have pointed out that E-Verify is error-prone and is an expansion of government power.

The New American noted the downside of E-Verify in a March 2015 article, "[Congress Pushes Obama-backed National Biometric ID for Americans](#)." That article, which was mainly about a bill introduced in Congress several years ago called the "Legal Workforce Act," said that the legislation "would also force [every] employer in America to purchase and use so-called 'E-Verify technology' to check with Washington, D.C., as to whether potential employees have government permission to work."

In the article, we quoted former Congressman Ron Paul (R-Texas), in his capacity as chairman of Campaign for Liberty, who warned that the national ID scheme, of which E-verify was a component, would be a nightmare. Among other concerns, Paul noted that it would allow federal bureaucrats to include biometric information — potentially including fingerprints, retinal scans, and more — that likely would be eventually used as a tracking device. It would also make it illegal for anyone to work in the United States without obtaining the national ID.

"Every time any citizen applies for a job, the government would know — and you can bet its only a matter of time until 'ID scans' will be required to make even routine purchases, as well," Paul warned, adding that "statists in both parties have been fighting to ram their radical national ID-database scheme into law" for years.

Constitutional conservatives opposed to companies hiring aliens who are not authorized to work in the United States and who might applaud ICE's recent crackdown have reason to oppose E-Verify and other facets of a national ID database. While safeguarding our borders and the employment opportunities of Americans is important, these objectives should not be accomplished at the expense of creating an Orwellian "big brother" state.



Photo: AP Images

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