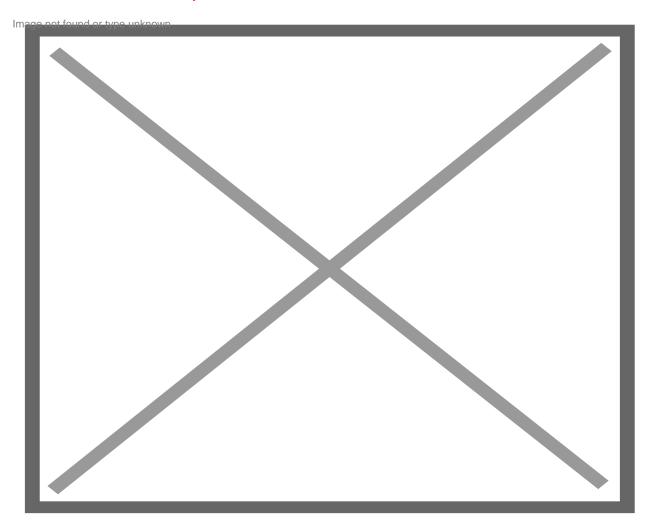# Trump Administration to Require Registry for Undocumented Immigrants, With Fines and Prison for Noncompliance

The administration plans to implement a registry mandating illegal immigrants aged 14 and older to submit fingerprints and home addresses or face fines up to $5,000 and six months in prison.

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The Trump administration is advancing plans to implement a registry for immigrants living in the United States illegally, requiring them to submit personal information or face significant penalties, according to The Wall Street Journal.

The proposed initiative mandates that undocumented immigrants, including children aged 14 and older, provide fingerprints and home addresses to the federal government. Those who meet the

criteria but fail to register could face fines of up to $5,000 and a maximum prison sentence of six months.

The initiative marks a major policy shift, as being in the U.S. illegally has traditionally been treated as a civil offense rather than a criminal act. While undocumented immigrants could previously be detained and deported, they were not typically subject to criminal prosecution solely for their presence in the country. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem emphasized the administration's stance in a memo outlining the policy: "Aliens in this country illegally face a choice. They can return home and follow the legal process to come to the United States, or they can deal with the consequences of continuing to violate our laws."

Legal experts warn that enforcing this policy could strain prosecutorial resources and increase the incarcerated population. Many undocumented also lack the financial resources to pay such high fines, raising concerns about the practicality of the measure.

The administration is relying on provisions of immigration law that have been rarely enforced in modern times. The origins of an immigrant registry date back to 1940, when it was introduced to monitor suspected communists. For decades, all immigrants, including permanent residents, were required to register annually at post offices. However, by the 1960s, the government abandoned the program, deeming it costly and ineffective, according to WSJ.

A similar registry was established under President George W. Bush following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. That initiative required men and boys from predominantly Muslim-majority countries to provide photographs and fingerprints to federal authorities. Tens of thousands complied, but many were subsequently arrested and deported.

Under the new proposal, undocumented immigrants who have not previously engaged with the government—such as those who have not applied for asylum or a work permit—will be required to complete a registration form. According to internal documents, the administration intends to provide a 30-day period for compliance once the registry is established.

President Trump had ordered the creation of a registration process as part of an executive order issued on his first day in office. The following day, the Justice Department directed U.S. attorneys' offices to prioritize prosecuting cases involving individuals who fail to register, WSJ reported.