

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 22, 2016

The Honorable Jeh Johnson  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Jeh Johnson:

This month, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Inspector General found that as many as 1,811 individuals failed to receive appropriate vetting by the U.S. Customs and Immigration Service (USCIS) due to failure to properly maintain records within the Automated Biometric Identification System (IDENT). We are writing to clarify the extent of this problem and the intended actions to mitigate the security risks that arose from this negligence.

Beginning in 2012, the Department of Homeland Security began the process of digitizing hardcopy records of fingerprints from the hundreds of thousands of aliens with prior deportation orders and criminal records. However, this crucial task was seemingly abandoned after U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) completed only half of the fingerprint digitization effort.

This failure to properly maintain a robust electronic record of deportation orders resulted in the naturalization of 858 individuals who had previously been ordered to be deported or were removed under alternate identities. An additional 953 individuals have been identified by the DHS Office of Operations Coordination (OPS) team for further review due to inaccurate recordkeeping.

The failure to robustly review and vet individuals for naturalization allowed several aliens with prior final deportation orders or with criminal histories to be granted security clearances and sensitive public positions.

We respectfully request that you provide responses to the below questions by no later than October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016:

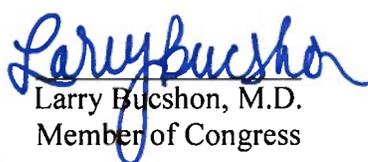
- The DHS Office of Inspector General identified approximately 148,000 fingerprint records that need to be processed and digitized into IDENT. Within the OIG report, the Department identified the previous 2012 digitization effort as costly and time intensive. The Department indicated that a contract would be awarded before the end of this fiscal year, with an estimated project completion date of September 30, 2017. What additional checks will be put into the naturalization review process in FY 2017 to prevent further naturalization of these 315,000 aliens who were previously identified as having criminal records or were assigned final deportation orders?
- Why was Operation Janus discontinued knowing it could impede further identification of fraud? Please provide what rationale was utilized to disband a team that appeared to effectively identify numerous flaws.

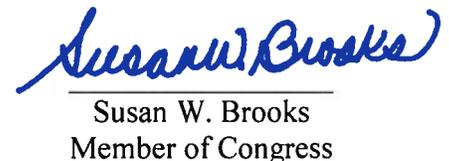
- 120 naturalized individuals have been identified and prioritized by ICE officials for potential prosecution and denaturalization. What factors necessitated the prioritization of these individuals, whether it be a flawed review process, prior criminal history, current job status, special interest countries ties, etc?
- What are the Department of Justice's standards for bringing either criminal or civil proceedings against individuals who were improperly naturalized? What rationale did the Department of Justice provide to the DHS prior to 2015 as to why Justice did not pursue criminal prosecution for fraudulent cases? What prompted the DOJ's Office of Immigration Litigation to change their policy in late 2015?
- What is the breakdown of countries that these 1,811 individuals arrived from, including either special interest countries or countries bordering special interest countries?
- In 2008, ICE staff was allegedly directed to begin transmitting fingerprints to IDENT. However, the Inspector General indicates that it wasn't until 2010 when records were consistently added. What flaws existed that prevented consistent and reliable recordkeeping practices for this two year period?
- The Inspector General report indicates that the existence of a prior deportation order does not automatically disqualify an individual from eligibility for citizenship. How many individuals does USCIS naturalize each year with previous deportation orders? What circumstances allow such an individual to be granted naturalization?
- The report indicates that four naturalized individuals admitted to USCIS staff alternate identities and receipt of final deportation orders but that the individuals were eventually naturalized. What rationale was provided by the USCIS adjudicators regarding these instances of ignoring prior final deportation orders and granting naturalization?

Thank you in advance for your prompt response. We look forward to working with your department moving forward to prevent such lapses from endangering U.S. homeland security.

Sincerely,

  
Todd C. Young  
Member of Congress

  
Larry Bucshon, M.D.  
Member of Congress

  
Susan W. Brooks  
Member of Congress