

Why fear national id cards?

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Featured in 2001 in the New York Times Alan Dershowitz's article " Why Fear National ID Cards? " presents the idea of a National ID Card system being put to use in the United States. The reasoning behind such an idea is this, with the sacrifice of some of the individual's privacy a greater level of security, equality, and productivity can be achieved while discarding some of the insensitive and inefficient methods of identification we use today.

A National ID Card consisting of a name, address, photo and fingerprint print would be the first national uniform ID that would replace the high number variations of identification that are issued state by state. This would drastically decrease the chances of forgery by the use of a unified system and strict means of distribution. A more comprehensive ID will allow for accelerated wait times at high security locations such as airports, and for those who decline to show such an ID would be subjected to further security measures.

The criteria in which people are required obtain or present identification would remain the same this allows for remnants of the old policy to remain in effect and further safe guards the citizens from a potential over stepping government. A more radical policy or criteria change could lead to an abuse of power or jumpstart similar non-popular policies to be acted on. It would also enable the rate of deportation of illegal immigrants to increase along with providing a better means to legal immigrants to display their status to authorities.

" Rights are a function of experience, and our recent experiences teach that it is far too easy to be anonymous -- even to create a false identity -- in this

large and decentralized country” (Barnet and Bedau). This point taken directly from the article puts into perspective the very real threat of terrorism. Terrorists hide amidst the general public, this is a concerning reality. No system can prevent all acts of terror but a National ID card with an embedded corresponding fingerprint can reduce the likelihood of the creation of false identities and catch those who are using the weaknesses of the current system to slip by unnoticed.

Alan Dershowitz’s stresses the importance of the elimination of the current trend of racial and ethnic stereotyping that acts as a countermeasure for possible threats to security. Improving civil liberties for these targeted groups is achieved by eliminating the need to target these groups in general. By utilizing security measures such as criminal-history retrieval systems and a corresponding fingerprint on the card itself we can remove the reason for profiling individuals due to their appearance alone.