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EMPLOYMENT & IMMIGRATION

White House may include mandatory E-Verify in immigration proposal

By **TED HESSON** and **ANITA KUMAR** | 05/09/2019 06:46 PM EDT

The White House is considering including mandatory nationwide E-Verify in its proposal to reform the legal immigration system, according to three people briefed on the plan.

The largely voluntary electronic system allows businesses to check the work authorization of their employees. Making E-Verify mandatory is a high priority for advocates who favor tougher enforcement to discourage illegal immigration — higher for many than building a border wall — and President Donald Trump included it in his immigration platform as a candidate in 2015. But his administration hasn't emphasized the issue since then.

Including E-Verify in the White House proposal may be intended to help win over immigration restrictionist groups like the Center for Immigration Studies. Such groups are closely allied with Trump but have expressed wariness that the administration plan that Jared Kushner presented earlier this week to Republican senators won't reduce legal immigration. Kushner's plan would increase skill-focused immigration and reduce family-based immigration, as these advocates favor. But it would admit roughly the same number of legal immigrants each year — a tough sell to the immigration hawks.

The strategy may be working.

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“Even though the plan doesn't reduce numbers overall, it contains no amnesty or guest worker increases, mandates E-Verify, and addresses the wholesale abuse of our humanitarian policies,” said R.J. Hauman, government relations director at the

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One of the people briefed on the plan said E-Verify may become part of a separate legislative effort, but that it's been part of the talks. "This seems to be still somewhat of a living, breathing document," the person said, adding that it seemed E-Verify was "still up in the air."

McClatchy first reported Thursday that the administration had weighed adding E-Verify to its legislation, which is still being drafted.

The White House plan may also tackle a number of Trump priorities, according to the people briefed on it.



IMMIGRATION

Kushner briefs senators on immigration plan

By ANDREW RESTUCCIA and BURGESS EVERETT

On the legal immigration front, it would end the diversity visa lottery, which offers 50,000 visas annually to people from countries with low rates of immigration to the U.S. Family and diversity visas would be reallocated to employment-based applicants.

The U.S. admits more than 1 million lawful permanent residents each year, but only 140,000 come through employment categories. The rest are relatives, refugees, or immigrants who arrive through the diversity visa lottery.

The White House proposal may also address reforms to asylum and detention laws to discourage migrants from traveling to the border to seek refuge, according to those briefed on it. The plan would override a federal court settlement to allow children to be detained for longer than 20 days, and raise the standard to pass a "credible fear" interview, the first stage in certain asylum claims.

The Trump administration has argued that a flood of migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border has necessitated changes to federal immigration laws. Border Patrol arrested nearly 99,000 migrants at the southwest border in April, part of a surge in recent months that resembles higher levels of illegal immigration from the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s.

While the Trump administration seeks to detain the maximum number of suspected border crossers, many have been released amid a crunch for processing and detention space. The

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“The chief problem I have with the bill is not the specifics,” said Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies. “It’s the fact that this proposal does not acknowledge that the level of immigration is too high.”

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