

the employer is: We will help you verify that the employee's social security number is legitimate and it matches the name provided. However, Secretary Chertoff explained the limitations of the program. He said, if two people are using the same Social Security number at the same time, he can't get the information to recognize it. So when a number comes in to his agency when he is working with these pilot programs, all he can assure is that the name goes with the Social Security number. But he can't get the information out of the Social Security Administration as to whether two people are using the same number.

In some cases, as in the child I mentioned, the same social security number is being used in as many as 17 different jobs at once. We have had thousands of cases in Colorado where this has happened, where the victim didn't realize that somebody else was using their Social Security number until they were contacted by the Internal Revenue Service and told that they weren't reporting all their income, and they discovered that somebody else was using it at their place of employment.

So by simply sharing this information, cases of identity theft could be discovered much sooner. Victims of identity theft deserve to have this information acted on, and my amendment enables this.

We have a choice. We can side with the victims or side with the thieves. I urge my colleagues to take the side of the victims and enact this common-sense reform.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to insert for the RECORD an article in the Rocky Mountain News entitled "Owens Wants Action on ID Theft."

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Rocky Mountain News, July 6, 2006]

OWENS WANTS ACTION ON ID THEFT  
(By David Montero)

Gov. Bill Owens called upon the legislature Wednesday to require employers to be more diligent when verifying the validity of Social Security numbers of those they hire.

On the eve of the legislature's special session to address illegal immigration, Owens rattled off a list of identity-theft transgressions in Colorado and said the current \$50 fine levied against businesses who submit false Social Security numbers isn't enough of a deterrent.

"We're going to seek additional penalty from the legislature so that we can actually make this more than a cost of doing business," he said.

It costs the state more than \$50 to levy the fine and prosecute the businesses submitting invalid Social Security numbers, he said.

Standing next to Rick Grice, executive director of the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Owens said that the numbers related to identity theft in the state are startling.

According to Grice's statistics, one Social Security number alone was reported by 57 different employers. Another Social Security number was found to be on the rolls of 50 different businesses.

During the first quarter of 2006, 368 Social Security numbers were filed more than six times by 2,828 employers, according to data combed over by Grice's department. Some numbers were obviously phony.

"The false numbers jumped off the pages of the reports by showing such numbers as 333-33-3333 and 444-4—well, you get the picture," Grice said.

Grice said he didn't know what kind of fine would be useful as a deterrent to employers submitting false Social Security numbers to the Labor Department, but that he suspects any new penalty would begin with a warning to the employer to check all workers' identification.

According to data provided by the governor's office, Colorado ranked fifth in the nation in identity-theft cases per 100,000 people.

Owens provided examples of identity theft victims—including an 84-year-old woman in Grand Junction who was deemed ineligible for federal housing assistance because her Social Security number was being used in Denver at a variety of jobs, making her income too high to qualify for the housing.

He also said a 10-year-old boy in Douglas County had his Social Security number used at 17 different jobs.

Owens, who recently signed legislation criminalizing identity theft and authorizing the formation of the Identity Theft Commission, suggested that employers use a federal basic pilot program run by the Social Security Administration and the Immigration and Naturalization Service, saying it is a "good first step," despite some flaws in the system.

Donnah Moody, vice president of government affairs at the Colorado Association of Commerce and Industry, said that the pilot program—designed for employers to verify the legality of Social Security numbers—isn't ready yet.

Mr. ENZI. I yield the floor.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I was unfortunately delayed from voting on the DeMint amendment No. 158—rollcall vote No. 25. For the record, I would have voted no on the motion to waive the Budget Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMARKS OF THE VICE  
PRESIDENT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, there was an interview between Wolf Blitzer and the President of the United States that was aired this morning on the news. Some of the statements that were made by the Vice President are very difficult to understand. When he was asked about Iraq, Vice President CHENEY said:

Bottom line is that we've had enormous successes and we will continue to have enormous successes.

It is interesting that the Vice President would make this statement barely

a week after the President of the United States announced that we are facing a slow failure in Iraq. The President sees a slow failure; the Vice President sees enormous successes.

This is not the first time the Vice President has made statements which defy reality. We can all recall the statements made by him and many others in the administration suggesting the presence of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear weapons, suggesting a connection somehow between Saddam Hussein and the tragedy of 9/11. It turns out that in each and every instance the Vice President was wrong.

We can also remember that in June of 2005 when we were facing one of the bloodiest, deadliest periods in Iraq, Vice President CHENEY said:

The level of activity that we see today from a military standpoint, I think, will clearly decline. I think they're in their last throes, if you will, of the insurgency.

Another quote from the Vice President which was not in touch with the reality of the war in Iraq.

We have had that from the beginning. Whether it was the Vice President's suggestion—this comes from March 16, 2003:

Now, I think things have gotten so bad inside Iraq, from the standpoint of the Iraqi people, my belief is we will, in fact, be greeted as liberators.

I will concede the Vice President later admitted he was wrong in making that statement.

The point I am making is this: If the current Secretary of Defense concedes to our Armed Services Committee that we are not winning this war, if the Baker-Hamilton bipartisan study group comes forward and says the situation is grave and deteriorating, if the President says our continued course of action is a slow failure, one has to wonder where the Vice President is receiving his information.

Earlier this morning, I said that he was delusional when it came to this issue. To be delusional is to be out of touch with reality. And I believe the Vice President has been out of touch with reality when he makes comments such as that.

At the least, the American people expect an honest answer about the situation in Iraq. I think what the President has said about a slow failure is an honest appraisal. I think what the Secretary of Defense, Mr. Gates, said about not winning this war is an honest appraisal. I think the findings of the Baker-Hamilton bipartisan study group that the situation is grave and deteriorating is an honest appraisal of reality.

This much I will say: The real success in Iraq, if we can point to it, is the fact that our brave men and women in uniform have done such a remarkable job. They have faced extraordinary responsibilities and assignments. They came to Iraq, invaded it, deposed that dictator, found him in a hole in the ground and brought him to trial, and