

Mexican Consulates Push Matricula Consular ID Cards

The following excerpts are from congressional testimony of Steven McCraw, FBI Office of Intelligence, before the House Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security, and Claims' oversight hearing on The Federal Government's Response to Consular Identification Cards, June 26, 2003.

The effort by Mexican consulates in the United States for the acceptance of consulate-issued identification cards used by Mexican nationals living in the U.S. poses serious legal and national security issues.

The cards—4.5 million of which have been issued—have drawn heated criticism because they are issued to illegal aliens who cannot access U.S.-issued identity documents. Because consular ID cards are only needed by people who aren't legally in the U.S. in the first place, communities and businesses that accept the cards as valid ID are undermining immigration enforcement and compromising U.S. security.

The FBI and the Department of Justice say that the cards are not a reliable form of identification and pose “major criminal threats” and a “potential terrorist threat.”*

The Mexican government has successfully lobbied many state and local governments and businesses, including the city of Atlanta, to accept the IDs for establishing identity, opening bank accounts, various social service uses, check cashing, and airline travel. The enormous population of illegal aliens, which many estimate to be more than 20 million, with nearly 70 percent coming from Mexico [2000 U.S. Census], is seen by many American banks as a lucrative client base for the handling charges on the money they are sending out of the U.S. [An estimated \$15 – \$17 billion in 2004, to Mexico alone.]

Making mortgage loans to illegal aliens is the

latest moneymaking scheme for many banks in the U.S.

Aiding Illegal Immigration

There's no way around the fact that consular ID cards are only needed by people who aren't legally in the U.S. in the first place. Indeed, relying on the Mexican matricula for identification is tantamount to boasting that the bearer is in the U.S. illegally, as no one here legally has a need for one. Every non-citizen other than an illegal alien will possess identity documents issued by the U.S. government (such as a valid visa).

Businesses and communities that accept these IDs as valid are openly encouraging illegal immigration and gutting immigration law enforcement. This is a violation of federal law. Which law will be ignored next?

National Security Risks

Aside from aiding and abetting illegal immigration, acceptance of the consular ID cards is placing critical national security matters in the hands of the foreign governments that issue these cards. Indeed, easy access to banking and financial institutions was one of the critical weaknesses in our system exploited by the September 11th terrorists. *Illegal immigration has increased since 9/11.*

Legal Liability

The U.S. Constitution does not permit a local or state government to decide, based on the advice or desires of a foreign government, that its own concerns override the will and intent of Congress. In choosing to recognize the consular ID card, local governments are raising significant, and potentially costly legal issues by exercising a form of their own foreign policy, which the Constitution reserves for the federal government.

Because of their ease of forgery, *most banks in Mexico do not accept the Matricula Consular.* ■