



ISSUE BRIEF:

National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS)

Discussion Points:

The National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) program was intended to track non-immigrants and serve as a counterterrorism tool. The most controversial aspect of NSEERS was a “domestic” component that solicited registrations from more than 80,000 males who were inside the United States on temporary visas from Muslim-majority countries.

NSEERS was poorly conceived, badly managed, and has been a waste of government time and resources. Instead of an effective national security tool, NSEERS has:

- created a second-class status for Arabs and Muslims and their families in the United States
- fostered mistrust and damaged partnerships between law enforcement and Arab American and Muslim communities
- contributed to the loss of American credibility abroad while failing to contribute significantly to national security

Recommendations:

The Administration should terminate the NSEERS program and ensure that those who did not register, or did not register properly, under NSEERS are no longer denied immigration benefits if otherwise eligible.

The Department of Justice and Department of Homeland Security should clarify how the data collected through NSEERS is used by relevant agencies and explain the current role of each agency in the program.

The Administration and Congress should prohibit similar registration programs or other schemes based on criteria that can be used as a proxy for targeting individuals on the basis of race, religion, national origin, or ethnicity. Such programs have proven to:

- be ineffective and misdirect valuable government resources
- negatively affect foreign policy interests
- risk isolating Arab American, Muslim, and other communities that could prove essential in protecting the United States