



Big Brother can't wait to ID us all

[York Dispatch | March 1 2006](#)

The battle over national identity cards is brewing on both sides of the Atlantic. The governments of Britain and the United States, knee-jerking to pandered fears of terrorism, apparently can't wait to have every man, woman and child carrying what essentially is a crowd-control device writ large.

Big Brother would prefer you look upon such a mandated system as most fatherly and protective. Proponents of the "National ID Card" would have such a document contain not only your photograph but fingerprints, retina scans and as much personal and background information on you as that little black strip on the back can contain.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., is especially enamored of the picture, retina scan and fingerprints modems.

So much for political candidates' claim of reducing the influence of government in our lives while living our freedoms unfettered.

Here's the catch: Republicans and Democrats are touting the Orwellian proposal as the American worker registry -- which effectively puts us all name, blood type, and no doubt, sexual preference, somewhere in that big computer accessible only to government and law enforcement.

It's another inch-like move to a police state -- and giving the government control over whether or not an employer can hire a new worker.

The card -- which supposedly would replace your passport, Social Security card, Medicare card, while containing information on any organizations of which you are a member -- is in your best interests.

Think personal safety, protection of the "Homeland" and, of course, illegal immigration. The card is the logical next step following Congress' panic creation of the Department of Homeland Security after 9/11.

Fast forward to 2006: Britain's House of Commons approved a bill requiring all residents "to carry a government issued identity that would include biometrics

such as a scanned fingerprint or a digital iris image," according to the Electronic Privacy Information Center's Web site. This despite warnings from the London School of Economics that the scheme "will be costly, inefficient, and easily subverted."

While similar legislation here failed to create a national ID in 1999, Congress rectified that error last year with its REAL ID Act of 2005. That mandates federal requirements for driver licenses.

Critics claim that once states comply with those requirements, a driver's license would be a de facto national ID document.

It hasn't reached that level yet. But all it takes is a major terrorist scare and a panicky Congress to amend the 2005 act and make a National ID Card a reality.

And that should scare all of us.

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