

## **Illegal workers snap up fake IDs**

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### **Body**

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**Illegal** immigration in the Southwest is on the rise - three years after Congress halted the hiring of undocumented **workers**, immigration officials said Wednesday.

The main culprit: readily available **fake** identification.

Officials have arrested 801,937 **illegal** immigrants on the Southwest border in the past 10 months, **up** 30 percent from the same period in the previous year, said Verne Jervis of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

"The word is out that it's easy to get work in the U.S. by buying the right **fake** documents from vendors on the border area. It's become a cottage industry," said Richard Day, chief counsel for Sen. Alan Simpson, R-Wyo.

Simpson co-sponsored a 1986 bill that made it **illegal** for employers to hire undocumented **workers**. The bill reduced the number of **illegal** immigrants until last May, when the trend began reversing, Jervis said.

The past three months have seen some of the highest increases in arrests, the INS said. December was **up** 58.3 percent; January, 39.6 percent; February, 57.3 percent.

The law cut the flow of **illegal** immigrants because they believed they could no longer get jobs in the USA, Day said.

But many, watching for weaknesses in the new law, found that **fake** documents could get them jobs, Day said.

"If they get caught, it's no big deal. They get a bus ride back and come back the next night."

A common procedure is to use a **fake** Social Security card or birth certificate to get a legitimate driver's license.

The Bush administration is studying the document verification system to see how it can be improved, Day said.

He said the problem could be resolved by requiring immigrants to get a nationally recognized work authorization card on counterfeit-resistant paper.

"I'm not talking about an **ID** card that you have to carry around on the street. You would just use it when you're hired," Day said.

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## Illegal workers snap up fake IDs

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