

# ***We're building better system; US-VISIT, other tools keep out thousands of criminals, terrorists.***

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## **Body**

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On Sept. 11, 2001, our nation lacked the necessary **tools** to identify and stop those who used fraudulent documents to illegally enter the country. We also know that government agencies enforcing immigration laws did not always coordinate or share information, which made it even easier for visitors to overstay their visas.

Today, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is implementing a comprehensive border security strategy to shut down vulnerabilities in our immigration and border management **system** and aggressively enforce our immigration laws.

We are **building** the capacity to confirm that individuals seeking to enter our country are who they claim they are, do not pose a security risk and leave when required. We are improving our ability to give federal partners the information they need to make sound, timely decisions. And we've **built** a more effective and reliable **system** for welcoming legitimate travelers to our country while protecting privacy and meeting our critical security goals.

**US-VISIT**, for example, has installed biometric entry capabilities at our ports of entry, making it nearly impossible for **terrorists** and **criminals** to enter the country using fraudulent documents. With this new **tool**, we have denied entry to **thousands** of **criminals** and immigration violators and tens of **thousands** more who have applied for visas.

**US-VISIT** complements the department's strong enforcement measures at the border and inside our country. By coupling these efforts with a proposed temporary worker program, we would make it more difficult for illegal immigrants to evade the law and would dramatically reduce incentives for visa overstays. We would take pressure off the border by creating a legal channel for temporary workers and free up law enforcement to focus on the greatest threats to our security -- **terrorists**, drug dealers and other dangerous **criminals**.

The challenges we face at our borders were years in the making, but the transformation of our immigration and border management **system** is well underway.

Jim Williams is director of the Homeland Security Department's **US-VISIT** program office.

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