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Holes exist in I-9 and E-Verify systems

Zipps raids point out they’re not ‘foolproof’

Daniel Gonzalez
Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

I-9 forms and E-Verify, two systems employers in Arizona are required to use to verify whether their employees are legally eligible to work in the United

States, are in the spotlight after federal immigration authorities raided more than a dozen Phoenix-area locations of the popular Zipps Sports Grill chain. The two federal systems are intended to prevent undocumented workers from getting jobs. But more broadly, they are intended to stop employers from know-

ingly hiring undocumented workers. The Jan. 26 Zipps raids demonstrate how the I-9 and E-Verify systems have fallen short of those goals. “It’s not a foolproof system because oftentimes there is an inability to tie a document to the individual who is presenting it,” said Colleen Putzel-Kavanaugh, an associate policy analyst at the nonpartisan nonprofit Migration Policy Institute.

What’s more, immigration raids at worksites often result in higher numbers of workers being arrested, often leading to their deportation, while owners often walk away with only fines or no criminal charges, Putzel-Kavanaugh said. That’s because federal law prohibits employers from “knowingly” hiring

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Boy detained by ICE released, back in MN

Judge ordered father, 5-year-old to be freed

James Powel
USA TODAY

Liam Conejo Ramos, the 5-year-old boy who became one of the symbols of the Trump administration’s immigration raids in Minnesota, has been released from a Texas detention facility, where he was held for over a week with his father. “Liam is now home. With his hat and his backpack. Thank you to everyone who demanded freedom for Liam,” U.S. Rep. Joaquin Castro, D-Texas, said on X. Ramos and his father, asylum-seeker Adrian Conejo Arias, were taken by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents while in their driveway after the boy came home from school on Jan. 20. Agents at the time refused an offer made by another adult living in the home to take the child. Instead, the agents led the boy to his front door and ordered him to knock, “essentially using a 5-year-old as bait,” according to a news release from Columbia Heights Public Schools. While ICE has disputed this claim, Vice President JD Vance defended the agency on Jan. 22, saying that the federal officials were targeting Conejo, an undocumented immigrant from Ecuador accused of trying to flee from immigration agents. As for the boy, Vance said, “Are they supposed to let a 5-year-old child freeze to death?” The pair’s release was ordered by U.S. District Judge Fred Biery on Jan. 31. Castro said he picked them up later that



Liam Conejo Ramos and his father, Adrian Alexander Conejo Arias, sit on the stairs at their Minnesota home Feb. 1 after a judge ordered their release from a detention facility in Texas. REP. JOAQUIN CASTRO’S BLUESKY ACCOUNT VIA REUTERS

ICE, DHS pressed to honor tribal IDs

Council wants status of Navajo, others respected

Arlyssa D. Becenti
Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Navajo Nation Council has passed legislation calling on the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and ICE to formally recognize Navajo Nation-issued tribal identification and respect the political status of Navajo citizens. The vote comes more than two weeks after Peter Yazzie, who is Navajo and Laguna Pueblo, was detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents in Peoria, even after presenting his Certificate of Indian Blood and other documentation proving his U.S. citizenship and tribal membership. News of Yazzie’s detention, first reported by The Arizona Republic, was not an isolated incident. Across the country, other tribal members have also been held by ICE agents, despite identifying themselves as Native American and presenting documentation to prove their status. “This Council is taking a firm stand for our people,” said Speaker Crystalline Curley, who sponsored the legislation. “Navajo citizenship must never be questioned, undermined or misclassified by any federal agency. We are exercising our sovereignty to protect our citizens and to ensure that our people are treated with dignity and respect wherever they go.”

The measure was introduced as emergency legislation during the Navajo Nation Council’s weeklong winter session, which started on Jan 26. The legislation also asks the Department of Homeland Security to implement mandatory, specialized training for ICE agents to ensure they can properly recognize tribal identification documents and understand the political status of Navajo citizens. Additionally, it directs the Navajo Nation Office of Vital Records and Identification to expand direct access to vital records services for Navajo citizens living both on and off the

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PHOENIX OPEN MENU 1C



New options are available at TPC Scottsdale’s 16th hole for the WM Phoenix Open. PROVIDED BY M CULINARY CONCEPTS

Student’s death sparks probe

The death of an 18-year-old Northern Arizona University student after an off-campus fraternity rush event in Flagstaff has led to investigations, authorities said. 3A

Skattebo grabs spotlight

Cam Skattebo was the man of the hour at ASU’s annual alumni and celebrity softball game on Feb. 1, hitting a home run and a double in his three at-bats. 1B

