

National ID verses National Security

News media pundits are fond of pointing out that the desire for personal privacy and the need for national security are exclusive of one another. Whereas it is clear that everyone has been called upon to sacrifice privacy to some degree as a consequence of the war on terrorism, it is not at all clear that the majority of incursions on our personal privacy are necessarily related to preventing terrorists from pursuing their trade.

The clamor for a national identity card in order to move around within America, comes uncomfortably close to a former time when the well-known phrase "your papers please" breathed out in heavily accented German, frightened virtually everyone.

The 2000 Congress and the President enacted new legislation that allows banks and other institutions to sell and share your social security number and other private information. This new law may well be the precursor to a national ID card program. As more and more institutions began using a social security number Americans have had a creepy sense that this supposedly confidential number had already become one's national ID.

Privacy concerns were raised about the Social Security number when the retirement program was first implemented in the 1930s. The government was quick to guarantee that the government assigned SS# would only be used for that system --- and none other. Of course, it was not long before the government itself began to use the SS# to track and identify everyone. Prior to the 1970s the FAA had already begun assigning pilots their social security number as their pilot's license number. Federally funded universities across America began using a student's SS# as their student number. And by the 1980's both private and public entities used this supposedly private number for customer tracking.

After the Genie was well out of the bottle, privacy concerns were finally addressed by federal prohibitions that made the sharing of personal social security numbers illegal. Well, that is until Congress reversed itself and passed the legislation in 2000 allowing banks and finance companies to share and sell this information. Robert Feinberg, a Washington attorney who specializes in banking and privacy issues, says the measure actually goes beyond that. "Not only your social security number but any data they happen to have, even if customers 'opt out' to share with third parties."

"There have also been cases in which banks have told customers they would not share data with third parties, but have gone ahead and done it

anyway,” says Feinberg. In this regard the U.S National Bank scandal quickly comes to mind, although dozens of major banks have been caught selling your data. In addition there have been dozens of articles written on identify theft, that have been so easily facilitated by the free exchange of your social security number and other confidential details about you to third parties. Incidentally, the Federal Trade Commission is now offering advice on how to avoid becoming a victim of identity theft.

Richard C. Shelby, U.S. Senator (R - Ala.) introduced a bill aimed at putting Genie back in the bottle, an impossible task but heroic in any event. The "Social Security Privacy Act of 2001" was designed to prohibit the sale and purchase of an individual's Social Security number by a financial institution. Social Security numbers would be designated "non-public personal information," subject to the privacy protections of the collective, Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, passed in 2000. Robert Feinberg, who tracked this bill through Capitol Hill, quotes Shelby as saying during Senate debate that the privacy protections in that legislation were simply "a sham."

Senator Shelby commented: "I believe Congress has a duty to stop Social Security numbers from being bought and sold like some common commodity. Social Security numbers are key to just about all personal information concerning an individual. While Congress waits to act, the easy access and extreme availability of our personal information has lead to fraud, abuse, identity theft, and in more extreme cases, to stalking and death."

This, possibly illegal, but casual sharing of your personal information attached to a SS# seems to have been going on for some time. Senator Shelby adds he "knows of no one in this country who thinks financial institutions should be making money by trafficking in social security numbers." He went on to say that if the Congress did not act to protect privacy in these regards "the American people who overwhelmingly support this issue, will lose confidence in the U.S. Congress and our ability to lead."

Using a Nevada Corporation to Protect Your Privacy

For privacy advocates, who are sick of having everything they are, own, and do, subject to other's scrutiny, you may want to conduct business activities beyond prying eyes and grasping hands. If going offshore simply isn't right for you consider establishing a Nevada or Wyoming Corporation to protect your privacy. You can form a company in either of these States by using a nominee to keep your name off public records. You can use a

Nevada or Wyoming company to do many of the things that you may now do as an individual.

For more information on how this is done I have written a new hardbound book entitled "The Nevada Advantage". The book goes on sale March 4th in bookstores across the country.

If you would like to attend a conference regarding the Nevada Advantage, the next one is scheduled in Atlantic City, NJ February 27th through March 1st. It is entitled "Asset Protection, Tax Planning Strategy and Wealth Preservation Conference". For more information go to this link:
www.laughlininternational.com/assetprotectionseminar.html

If you seek a qualified privacy and asset protection consultant for offshore strategies, call the Sovereign Crest Alliance at 869-466-3794 or go to their web site www.sovereigncrest.com

Until next time... Terry L Neal