



TENNESSEE'S IMMIGRATION PACKAGE: A MODEL FOR THE STATES

March 10, 2026

**ENFORCING THE LAW. PROTECTING THE TAXPAYERS.
ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY.**

TOPLINE POINTS

- ★ This comprehensive immigration legislative package positions Tennessee as a leader in the fight to protect public safety, the rule of law, and economic opportunities for American citizens.
- ★ Notable aspects of the bill package include mandatory E-Verify for public employees, increased cooperation with federal immigration enforcement efforts, greater information sharing to crack down on fraud, enforcement measures to protect taxpayers, and more.
- ★ Every state became a border state under President Biden – and that means every state should follow the lead of states like Texas, Florida, Indiana, and Tennessee with legislative changes to supercharge mass deportation, protect benefits that belong to citizens, and crackdown on illegal alien employment.

CONTENTS OF THE IMMIGRATION PACKAGE

Verify Lawful Status for all Public Benefits ([Tennessee HB1710](#))

Current law allows for ICE reporting, but it does not require it. It exempts emergency care and disaster aid, and applies only to state agencies and local health departments. Enforcement is inconsistent at best.

Proposed changes in **HB1710** would require state and local governments to verify lawful status for taxpayer benefits and require violations to be reported to the state AG. It will mandate referrals to ICE and Tennessee Homeland Security if the status of a recipient is not verifiable. Additionally, the bill closes loopholes that empower local governments to not comply, and it will empower the AG to withhold state-shared sales tax revenue to local governments that do not comply. Furthermore, all driver's license exams will be carried out in English. A person can decide to take the exam in a different language once, but if they choose to do so, they must pass an English version of the exam within one-year and can only drive for specific purposes until they pass the English exam. Lastly, the bill will require the Department of Safety to verify the legal status of any applicant for written or oral exams for the issuance of a driver's license or car registration.

Mandatory E-Verify for all Public Employees ([Tennessee HB1705](#))

Current law prohibits hiring illegal aliens, but enforcement is weak. E-Verify is optional within the state, but only serves as a "safe harbor". Contractors are restricted under current law, but direct public hires are not verified.

Proposed changes in **HB1705** would make E-Verify mandatory for all new state and local government hires, end taxpayer-funded illegal labor, and ensure that local governments who



fail to comply will lose shared-sales tax revenue. This bill aligns public hiring standards with private-sector standards and restores protections that were weakened in 2016.

Proof of Lawful Status for All Licenses ([Tennessee HB1706](#), [1707](#), and [1709](#))

Current law has licenses qualify as public benefits, but the enforcement is uneven. There are no universal standards across all professions, and licensing gaps allow for illegal labor to persist. While exceptions exist for physicians and liquor licenses.

Proposed changes in **HB1706, 1707, and 1709** will require lawful status for nurses, teachers, contractors, and licenses professional. The trio of bills will protect taxpayers and licensed professions, establish uniform licensing standards, and safeguard children, families, patients, students, and consumers. Additionally, it will require verification of legal status to acquire a driver's license.

Quarterly Reports on Unverifiable Immigration Status ([Tennessee HB1710](#))

Current law stipulates that agencies only report compliance once a year. There is no database that keeps track of how many illegal alien applicants are denied. This all leads to limited transparency for lawmakers and taxpayers.

Proposed changes in **HB1710** would require quarterly reporting from all state agencies to the legislature, the Department of Safety, and the Department of Finance and Administration. The quarterly report will track the frequency of unverified encounters, provide real-time data to stewards of taxpayer dollars, and enable accountability and targeted enforcement.

Monthly Reporting of Non-Citizens Receiving Benefits ([Tennessee HB1711](#))

Current law terminates benefits only after fraud is confirmed. Criminal referrals can occur, but there is no recurring reporting. Lastly, there is no centralized tracking across agencies.

Proposed changes in **HB1711** call for monthly data sharing with DHS via the Department of Finance and Administration, the centralized immigration enforcement division of the Department of Safety, and the legislature. The bill will create an active enforcement pipeline, and improve coordination with federal authorities. Finally, it requires local governments and law enforcement agencies to report violations or face Class A misdemeanors.

Annual Report on the Cost of Illegal Immigration ([Tennessee HB1711](#))

Current law provides no comprehensive fiscal picture, tracks criminal alien data but not their costs, and offers no full picture of how much it costs schools and hospitals.

Proposed changes in **HB1711** will require Finance and Administration to calculate total losses; include schools, prisons, hospitals, and social services, and provide real financial data for legislators and the governor.

Verify Lawful Status of K-12 Students ([Tennessee HB793](#))

Current law mandates that schools must enroll students and have very limited verification. This leads to no consistent statewide data, and makes long-term planning difficult.



Proposed changes in **HB793** will protect public schools that receive public funds for families and students alike. It will force schools to verify all students starting the next school year, and new enrollees thereafter. This bill will lead to more transparency within school districts, protect classroom resources, and aid long-term planning.

Mandate Court Cooperation with ICE ([Tennessee HB1707](#))

Current Law has status checks occurring at arrest and booking, law enforcement reporting to ICE and Das, and does not require courts to cooperate.

Proposed changes in **HB1707** will prevent the court system from obstructing enforcement; creates consequences for violators at the local level; closes gaps between the arrest and adjudication; and reinforces the state's anti-sanctuary stance. This bill makes it known to the courts that there is a zero-tolerance policy for non-cooperation, and requires law enforcement agencies to sign up for 287g.

Make Illegal Entry and Re-Entry a State Crime ([Tennessee HB1704](#))

Current law has illegal entry as a federal offense only, requires fingerprinting, but DNA collecting is limited, and state enforcement is insufficient.

Proposed changes in **HB1704** will criminalize illegal entry and re-entry at the state level. This will make any failure to enforce the law as a judge or district attorney general an impeachable offense. While illegal aliens are in custody, this bill will require that they be fingerprinted and have their DNA collected. This strengthens repeat-offender tracking, and aligns the state with border state enforcement efforts.

Quarterly Immigration Reporting by Local Law Enforcement ([Tennessee HB1711](#))

Current law guides LEAs to verify status at arrest, but the reporting is inconsistent. While sanctuary policies are banned within the state, loopholes remain. Also, ICE MOUs are optional.

Proposed changes in **HB1711** will mandate local law enforcement to work with city and county governments to report to the state, ICE, and DHS any issues regarding illegal immigration. Additionally, it will require quarterly reporting of immigration-related arrests to the centralized immigration enforcement division. Standardizing data statewide, increasing transparency, and reinforcing compliance will ensure that radicals within the state don't ignore the law.

