

mission on Immigration Reform has a simple solution: "A [redacted] on the social security number," says former US Representative Barbara Jordan, who chaired the commission.

Details are shaky. One possibility is a toll-free number that would connect employers to a computer set up by the Social Security Administration and the Immigration and Naturalization Service. On your first day at a new job, your boss would call the number, then type in your social security number. Your boss would then hand you the phone so you could dial your mother's maiden name (already in the Social Security Administration's database) as a "PIN." Just like a credit card, your boss would then get either an authorization code or a rejection.

Nobody can be sure whether such a national system would work. There are, after all, 50 million people in the US who start new jobs every year. So, the administration wants a series of trials to take place in the five states with the highest levels of illegal immigration: California, Texas, Florida, New York, and Illinois.

"The pilots could begin this calendar year," says Phil Gambino, a press officer with the Social Security Administration.

Cecilia Muñoz, a policy analyst with the National Council of La Raza, a Latino advocacy group, is worried that employers might use the system as a tool for discrimination. "What is going to prevent the employer from screening out job applicants?" she asks.

The most vehement opposition to the database is not from liberal groups but from libertarian organizations, such as the Cato Institute, and conservatives. "A computerized registry system will lead inexorably to a government-issued national identification card," said House Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-Texas). Once the system is in place, he added, employers will need identification cards to verify workers' social security numbers. "Whether to administer government health care or stop immigration, a national ID card is a radical expansion of government power. All who oppose big government should oppose this very dangerous idea." — *Simson L. Garfinkel*

VR arcade game, nor will it be sophisticated enough to depict such events as the Australian yacht's splitting in the race: its real goal is to boost reporters' grasp of wh on in a highly tactical sport. But with an event that con prides itself on breaking new technological ground, th

States of Identification

It's called "work-site verification," and according to the Clinton administration, it's the best way to cut the number of illegals streaming into the United States. It means enforcing the laws that prohibit US employers from hiring illegal workers — and slapping heavy fines on those who do. Right now, work-site verification is a joke. Take a new job, and you can prove your status with any of 29 different forms of identification. Forgeries abound. So the bipartisan Com-



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id reputation as a breakthrough is