

**Coburn Amendment 1357—To require an in-person interview by US Citizenship and Immigration Services of certain people applying for Registered Provisional Immigrant status, including criminal aliens, those who have been previously deported, and/or those who have absconded from immigration proceedings.**

**Sen. Carper is Co-Sponsoring**

**Summary:** This amendment would clarify language in the bill to ensure that, before granting a waiver of ineligibility for people applying for Resident Provisional Immigrant Status, DHS—through the US Citizenship and Immigration Services—shall conduct an in-person interview if the person: 1) is a criminal alien, 2) has previously been deported, and/or 3) has absconded from prior immigration proceedings. This ensures that US Citizenship and Immigration Services can be our last line of defense to prevent criminals or other ineligible aliens from gaining RPI status.

**The American people are being told that this bill will prohibit people who are serious criminals or are potential threats to public safety or national security from being eligible for legalization.**

But there is significant room for error in a process that involves 11 million people.

One of my concerns is that it is unclear how aggressively DHS will screen RPI applicants.

The purpose of this amendment is to require US Citizenship and Immigration Services to conduct an in-person interview before any waiver is granted for individuals applying for RPI if they meet certain conditions, such as:

- Being a criminal alien
- Someone who has previously been deported, or
- Someone who has previously absconded from immigration proceedings.

**It is a real privilege to live in this country and to become an American citizen.**

It is simply unfair to the many millions of people who have been waiting in line to quickly legalize all of the 11 million people who either knowingly or unknowingly have broken our immigration laws.

It is particularly unfair if we give this privilege to people who have broken our laws or ignored our immigration laws and proceedings.

For example, CRS has estimated in the past that the population of absconders is more than 500,000 people.<sup>1</sup>

These are people who have been told to appear in court for immigration proceedings and have blatantly ignored that order.

As a nation, we have an obligation to our citizens—***and to legal immigrants***—to uphold the rule of law and ensure the process is fair to all.

This amendment will simply require that USCIS would conduct an in-person interview to examine these peoples' applications before DHS grants a waiver.

**Giving a trained USCIS worker the opportunity to conduct this kind of in-person interview should be our last line of defense.**

Given the scale of this bill, I remain concerned that many people who could be threats to our public safety may fall through the cracks and be granted a legal status.

My hope is that this amendment will ensure the US Citizenship and Immigration Service will be able to do the kind of due diligence that will guarantee that only individuals who are eligible to enter our country under current law are able to do so.

---

<sup>1</sup> In 2005, CRS estimated that the alien absconder population was 536,644 in FY2005.  
[http://www.crs.gov/pages/Reports.aspx?PRODCODE=RL33351&Source=search#\\_Toc226172364](http://www.crs.gov/pages/Reports.aspx?PRODCODE=RL33351&Source=search#_Toc226172364)