In June 2025, the Trump administration made headlines by reactivating the long-dormant **Alien Registration Act of 1940**, a wartime-era law that now requires virtually all non-citizens in the United States to **register with the federal government**, including the submission of **biometric data like fingerprints**.

This move has introduced a wave of uncertainty, fear, and confusion among undocumented immigrants, foreign nationals, and even visa holders—raising important legal and constitutional questions about self-incrimination, due process, and public safety.

What Is the Alien Registration Act?

Originally passed in **1940 during World War II**, the Alien Registration Act (also known as the **Smith Act**) was designed to track foreign nationals in the U.S. and prosecute those suspected of subversion or disloyalty.

Under the **revived 2025 order**, non-citizens must:

- Register themselves in a federal database,
- Provide personal details including date and method of U.S. entry,
- Submit biometric fingerprints,
- Confirm ongoing compliance.

This sweeping mandate applies to:

- Undocumented immigrants,
- Visa overstayers,
- Work visa holders,
- Asylum seekers,
- Students on F-1 or J-1 visas.

Understanding Your Alien Registration Number (A-Number): The Complete Guide for Immigrants

⚖ The “Catch-22” Problem for Immigrants

Legal analysts have raised alarm over the **constitutional dilemma** now facing immigrants:

> **To register is to expose yourself; not to register is to risk criminal prosecution.**

Here's what that means:

- If a non-citizen registers, they may admit to immigration violations (e.g., illegal entry, overstaying a visa), which could be used by ICE in future removal proceedings.
- If they choose not to register, they can now be **criminally charged** under the Smith Act—a law that previously hadn't been enforced in this context for over 70 years.

This raises complex **Fifth Amendment** (self-incrimination) concerns, especially for undocumented immigrants who fear their data may lead directly to deportation.

Who Is Most at Risk?

The order broadly impacts:

- Individuals without legal status (undocumented immigrants),
- Those with pending visa renewals or asylum applications,
- Foreign workers, students, and temporary residents unsure of their standing,
- Mixed-status families.

The burden also affects **DACA recipients**, TPS holders, and even those under lawful presence but awaiting adjustment of

status.

Enforcement in Action

The **Department of Homeland Security (DHS)** and **Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)** have already begun operationalizing this measure by:

- Issuing formal notices to non-citizens,
- Tracking applicants through interagency databases,
- Using IRS, Social Security, and DMV data to identify targets.

Several immigrant rights organizations have expressed concern that these new enforcement tools **blur the line between immigration compliance and criminalization**, potentially leading to **mass deportation** scenarios.

What Should Immigrants Do Now?

In such uncertain times, making uninformed decisions could result in **life-altering consequences**.

Here are five key steps to consider:

1. **Do not panic.**
   Stay calm and gather information from credible sources.
2. **Do not register without legal guidance.**
   Registering could unintentionally disclose facts that trigger removal proceedings.
3. **Consult an immigration attorney.**
   Every case is unique. A lawyer can assess risk and offer legally sound advice.
4. **Stay informed.**
   Monitor official announcements and legal updates. Avoid misinformation on social media.
5. **Document everything.**
   If you're currently in the U.S., retain all legal paperwork, employment records, and proof of residency.

⚖ How Lunel Law Can Help

While this blog is intended to inform and not promote, it's worth noting that **attorneys like David Lunel**—fluent in English, French, and Spanish—are already helping immigrants navigate these new policies. Lunel Law has been working with clients from Latin America, Europe, and beyond to understand how best to respond, avoid deportation risks, and protect legal rights.

Stay Updated and Informed

Keep track of official resources like:

- USCIS Policy Manual
- DHS Immigration Enforcement Updates
- American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA)
- Legal Aid at the National Immigration Law Center

Source Citation:

Based on original reporting by Politico: "Trump administration revives Alien Registration Act, sparking legal fears among immigrants." Published June 14, 2025.
Read the full article here: Politico Article