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Sunday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2003

Mr Iain Coleman  
MP for Hammersmith and Fulham  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr Coleman,

I am writing to you to express my concern about The Home Secretary expressed wishes[1] to reintroduce compulsory national identity cards for the first time since World War II.

As Mr Blunkett has already claimed that ID cards will stop terrorists and illegal immigrants, I fully expect to hear that they will also prevent drug abuse and capture pedophiles in the coming weeks to complete the usual line up.

If the intention *is* to stop illegal workers I would challenge Mr Blunkett to explain how this is fundamentally superior to the current measures in place. It is quite obvious that requiring employers to demand this ID card is not a viable procedure. Employers are already required to confirm an employee's eligibility to work and as a recent Telegraph[2] report showed, it is still easy to work illegally. There will always be some employers who will be willing to ignore certain legal obligations to procure cheap labour.

And, based on what reasoning, does Mr Blunkett expect these ID cards, in contrast to every other form of identification in history, to be unforgeable? Recently, a Daily Mail reporter described[3] how she obtained a fake EU passport, driving license and French ID card for the sum of 1300.

In contrast to these extremely dubious benefits, the costs of such a scheme are very real. The Home Office estimates a fiscal cost of 1.5 billion to 3 billion, depending on the day of the week and phase of the moon. But, like garage repair estimates, experience tells us that reality will have other ideas.

“We know from industry estimates that a 'smart' card with biometric information such as the one proposed will cost well over 100 per head, so the final cost will be more like 5.5 billion” [4]

And this is a government that cannot manage to pay tax credits, deliver passports or enforce child maintenance payments without catastrophic system failure.

In addition to, and possibly transcending, the fiscal costs, I and many of my fellow subjects resent this infraction of our liberties. It is another example of this government's view that it should have complete information everyone, coming, as it does, fast behind:

- Five draft statutory instruments extending the Regulation of Investigatory Powers(2000) Act [5]
- Legislation for the next session of parliament to compel “local authorities to create files on every child in England, including intimate personal information about parents' relationships with other partners and any criminal record, alcohol or drug abuse in the extended family.” [6]
- Information that the 'Oyster card' replacements for Underground season tickets will record full details of every journey you make on a central database and that these records will be retained for “a number of years”. [7]

I therefore request that you, as my elected representative in Parliament, take action in line with Trade and Industry Secretary Patricia Hewitt [8] to ensure that Mr Blunkett's plans are eviscerated.

Yours sincerely

Adam Langley

- [1] [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/3126540.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/3126540.stm)
- [2] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2003/07/17/ncard17.xml&sSheet=/news/2003/07/17/ixhome.html>
- [3] The Daily Mail, Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2003
- [4] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2003/07/17/ncard17.xml&sSheet=/news/2003/07/17/ixhome.html>
- [5] <http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/dsis2003.htm>
- [6] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/guardianpolitics/story/0,3605,1049152,00.html>
- [7] <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/3121652.stm>
- [8] BBC1 Question Time, September 26<sup>th</sup>