

119<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. R. 7708

To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to return identification documents to individuals upon their release from custody, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 25, 2026

Ms. PINGREE introduced the following bill; which was referred to the  
Committee on the Judiciary

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## A BILL

To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to return identification documents to individuals upon their release from custody, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Protecting All Personal  
5       Effects and Records from Seizure Act of 2026” or the  
6       “PAPERS Act of 2026”.

1 **SEC. 2. RETURN OF DOCUMENTS AFTER RELEASE FROM**  
2 **DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY CUS-**  
3 **TODY.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 4 of title II of the Immi-  
5 gration and Nationality Act is amended by inserting after  
6 section 236A the following:

7 **“SEC. 236B. RETURN OF DOCUMENTS AFTER RELEASE**  
8 **FROM CUSTODY.**

9 “(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection  
10 (b), upon releasing any individual from custody under this  
11 Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall return to  
12 such individual each covered document taken from the in-  
13 dividual while in the custody of the Department of Home-  
14 land Security.

15 “(b) EXCEPTION.—The Secretary may retain a cov-  
16 ered document only if—

17 “(1) the document is determined to be fraudu-  
18 lent;

19 “(2) the document is contraband or evidence in  
20 a pending criminal proceeding; or

21 “(3) the individual is no longer legally entitled  
22 to possess the document under Federal law.

23 “(c) CERTIFIED COPIES.—If a covered document is  
24 retained pursuant to subsection (b), the Secretary shall  
25 provide the individual with a written explanation of the

1 applicable exception and a certified copy of the document,  
2 unless prohibited by law.

3 “(d) COVERED DOCUMENT.—For purposes of this  
4 section, the term ‘covered document’ includes an original  
5 passport, permanent resident card, employment authoriza-  
6 tion document, birth certificate, driver’s license, social se-  
7 curity card, and any other similar government-issued doc-  
8 ument.

9 “(e) NO OPERATIONAL EXCEPTION.—Operational  
10 convenience or an anticipated future immigration enforce-  
11 ment action does not constitute grounds to retain a docu-  
12 ment after releasing an individual from custody under this  
13 Act.”.

14 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents  
15 of the Immigration and Nationality Act is amended by in-  
16 serting after the item related to section 236A the fol-  
17 lowing:

“236B. Return of documents after release from custody.”.

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