

HOW DATA BROKERS HARM IMMIGRANTS

SUMMARY

Data brokers are companies that collect, aggregate, and sell personal information such as names, addresses, social security numbers, and purchase history, often without the knowledge or consent of the individuals involved.

This data can be used to target immigrants for deportation, marketing for predatory products, or criminalization.

DISCRIMINATION & DUE PROCESS VIOLATIONS

Discrimination and Exploitation: Data brokers compile and sell sensitive information such as immigration status and employment history. This information can be used by employers, landlords, and financial institutions to discriminate against immigrants, denying them jobs, housing, or credit.

- Landlords may engage in discriminatory practices toward immigrants like charging higher rents or requiring co-signers based solely on a tenant's immigration status.
- Most financial institutions consider immigration status when evaluating a credit application, and some have maintained blanket policies denying credit to individuals based on immigration status.

Circumvention of Due Process: Immigration enforcement agencies, particularly Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP), purchase extensive personal data on immigrant communities from data brokers.

- ICE tracks people with advanced surveillance tools, which utilize mobile phone location data, social media information, license plate data, and extensive databases of personal information.
- ICE also tracks jail bookings of undocumented immigrants, which allows federal agencies to detain immigrants upon release from local custody, despite local prohibitions on information sharing.
- Utility company data may be used to determine household occupancy, creating detailed histories of community movements and relationships.

REINING IN DATA BROKERS WOULD HELP TO PROTECT IMMIGRANTS

Policymakers have an urgent responsibility to limit data brokers' ability to collect, share, and sell personal data. Stronger laws and rules are necessary to provide guardrails around data brokers' collection and sale of personal information.

Minimizing the data that brokers amass and sell in the first place is a powerful safeguard for immigrants: you don't have to protect what you don't collect.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION: <https://epic.org/issues/consumer-privacy/data-brokers/>

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