

Kris Kobach

- Kris Kobach, the Secretary of State of Kansas, **advises President-elect Trump** on immigration and homeland security.
- During the Bush administration, Kobach worked in the Justice Department to create the **registry**, commonly known as NSEERS, **of immigrants from 24 Muslim-majority countries** and North Korea after 9/11. In a post-election meeting with Trump on homeland security, Kobach discussed the reintroduction of the NSEERS program.
- NSEERS, the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System, required all male visa-holders, 16 years and older, from countries designated “havens for terrorists” to register with the government. 24 of the 25 countries were Muslim-majority. The approximately 80,000 people affected were fingerprinted, photographed, interviewed, and required to check in occasionally. At least 13,000 went through deportation proceedings. NSEERS was suspended in 2011 after the Department of Homeland Security said the information provided by the program was redundant. NSEERS received harsh criticism from rights groups that believe it was **discriminatory**. No one registered by the program was convicted of a terrorism-related charge before deportation.
- After Kobach and Trump’s conversations about reinstating NSEERS came to light after the election in late 2016, the Obama administration announced that the program would be dismantled before Trump’s inauguration.
- During a post-election meeting with Trump, Kobach also recommended **halting Syrian refugee resettlement** in the US and instituting “extreme vetting questions for high-risk aliens.” The topics of these questions — “Sharia law, Jihad, equality of men and women, United States Constitution” — reflect stereotypical concerns about Muslims and indicate that Muslims would be the primary targets of this vetting. Critics consider this vetting plan an ideological or **religious test**.
- Kobach was an attorney with the Federation for American Immigration Reform, which the Southern Poverty Law Center designates a hate group.
- Viewed as an immigration hardliner by many, he said this about Khizr Khan, who spoke at the 2016 Democratic convention: “It is maddening to be lectured about our Constitution and about what American law should be by **aliens** in the United States.” Khizr Khan, the father of an American Muslim serviceman killed in Iraq, is a US citizen.
- Kobach was also a proponent of **anti-Sharia or “foreign law” bills**. In 2012, he encouraged the Republican party platform to include a stance against the consideration of foreign law in US courts. The party adopted the position amid a broader, concerted campaign by some Republicans to engender concern about Islamic law in America.

IMPACT: Kris Kobach is the architect of NSEERS, a Bush administration program that registered male immigrants from mainly Muslim majority countries. Given his advisory role to President-elect Trump, many civil rights groups worry about his desire to have this program, which they consider discriminatory, reinstated.