

Immigration Policy Center (IPC)

...providing factual information about immigration and immigrants in the United States.

For Immediate Release

Defective E-Verify Expands Despite Flaws Experts' Comments Slam Employment Authorization Program

August 11, 2008

Washington, DC--Final comments are due today on a [rule](#) that would make E-Verify mandatory for approximately 200,000 public and private federal government contractors and their 4 million employees. Employers, labor unions, privacy experts, and immigrant advocates are all submitting comments that express deep concern about the impact of E-Verify on American workers. The Department of Homeland Security should heed their advice before a vast new expansion of E-Verify is considered.

For months Congress has heatedly debated the merits of E-Verify -- a small, voluntary electronic employment authorization program run by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in collaboration with the Social Security Administration (SSA). Several bills have been introduced to expand E-Verify and make it mandatory for all employers. Groups ranging from [employers](#) to unions to [immigrant advocates](#) and [privacy specialists](#) have warned against the expansion of the program until significant improvements are made, citing the problems a mandatory system would create for employers and U.S. workers alike. Most notably, during [hearings](#) that highlighted the massive drawbacks of E-verify, witnesses described the huge burden that an expanded E-Verify would put on [SSA](#), resulting in longer waiting times for American workers seeking their benefits. Analysis of the program and evidence coming from those who have used it indicate that the current program is seriously flawed, ineffective, and could potentially cost thousands of U.S. citizens and legal residents their jobs due to database errors.

On July 31, 2008 the House of Representatives voted to extend E-Verify for another five years, keeping it a voluntary program. The House also mandated reports on the program's usage and effectiveness, and reimburse the Social Security Administration for expenses they incur. Similar legislation is now being considered in the Senate. Meanwhile, several states, including [Arizona](#), Mississippi, and [Oklahoma](#) have made E-Verify mandatory. The experiences in these states offer a cautionary tale. In Arizona, employers have already been erroneously notified that native-born U.S. citizens are not authorized to work, businesses have decided not to invest additional dollars in the state, industries are unable to find enough workers, and the state economy may lose as much as \$10 billion.

Before any new expansion of the deeply flawed E-Verify program is considered, the Department of Homeland Security must scrupulously review today's comments and address these troubling concerns.

###

The Immigration Policy Center has produced numerous [reports and analyses](#) of E-Verify and the various bills introduced in Congress to expand the program. For more information on E-Verify and other timely issues, please see IPC's webpage, www.immigrationpolicy.org.

For more information contact Andrea Nill, 202-507-7520 or email anill@aifl.org