

**Written Statement of Jessica St. Pierre
U.S. Citizen, Negatively Impacted by E-Verify**

**House Committee on the Judiciary
Subcommittee on Immigration Policy and Enforcement**

Hearing on: ["E-Verify- Preserving Jobs for American Workers"](#)

February 10, 2011

My name is Jessica St. Pierre and I am a U.S. citizen, born and raised in Florida. Due to an error in the employment verification system called E-Verify, I was wrongly identified as not having employment authorization. I was fired and then remained unemployed for months. This is my story.

It was November 09, 2010 the day my life changed forever. This was the day that I was fired due to an error in the system called E-Verify. Despite providing supporting documents and explaining over and over again to my employer that I was work authorized, I was fired. Unable to speak and still in the state of shock, I drove home to my family and it was there that I broke down in tears and told them what happened. My dad told me don't cry and he said that we were going to fix this tomorrow at the Social Security Administration (SSA) office. We went to my local SSA office and they told us everything was correct in their system. They indicated that my name and date of birth matched what was in the system.

After visiting SSA, I called up the employer and they said "Well that's not what it says in our system." When I inquired, my employer told me that they were using E-Verify and that the program indicated that there was an error.

As the days and weeks passed, I tried to correct this error, in vain, in numerous ways. For example, the following week, I went down to a legal services organization and they referred me to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). When I talked with my local EEOC office, they told me that I didn't really have case but advised me to call E-Verify and find out what was going on. I took the advice and immediately researched the number to E-Verify.

I called the hotline and waited almost an hour just to hear that the representative say that after running my name in the system that everything is okay. I felt relieved and I asked if she could send that documentation in the mail so that I could take it back to my employer. She said that she could not send me this information, but could contact my employer. I said okay and asked her to do so. Again, I could not receive any information confirming E-Verify's error. Despite the call from the E-Verify program, my employer still could not straighten out this mess. I thought a call from E-Verify to my employer would get my job back, but I contacted the employer and was told there was nothing I could do to get my job back.

Angry and frustrated, I thought I knew this wasn't right. I have done everything right, including going to all the proper agencies to get this situation resolved. What else is a worker supposed to do? I was hurt and because I felt helpless and like there was nothing that I could do even though I followed all the right steps. I had decided to just give up but then decided to Google exactly what I got fired for "failure to provide employment eligibility". I was shocked to find an article on what I was going through and with that article were other stories of people who are US citizens going through the exact same thing! I was not alone and now I knew there was a number that I could call to share my story and I did.

In the month of December I contacted the National Immigration Law Center and they were ready to help free of charge. They did everything in their power to get me the answer that I was looking for. As it turns out, the employer had placed two spaces after my last name which prompted an SSA tentative nonconfirmation (TNC). The employer had given me the TNC instead of the referral notice to take back to the SSA. SSA, seeing that I had brought the TNC, immediately thought that this was a case of employment identity theft and pointed me in the direction of the credit bureau. I then contacted the company that was monitoring my credit and they did an extensive investigation which came of nothing. Of course it came up nothing because the problem was at the employer and nowhere else.

Four months later in February 2011, I met with the employer and they claimed I could come back to my position. However, after being out of work over 3 months, I have since moved on to another company. Though my current position has significantly lower pay, I realized that the money wasn't what motivates me. This employer didn't put me through the E-Verify rollercoaster ride, so I decided to stay with my new job. I would like to take this time out to thank the NILC for all of their time, patience, and hard work. For I know without them I probably would have never known that there was an answer to my problem.