

FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

201 WEST PARK AVENUE
TALLAHASSEE, FL 32301-7715

PHONE (850) 205-6820
FAX (850) 205-6849
WWW.FLACCB.ORG

MICHAEL B. SHEEDY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



February 10, 2020

The Honorable Senator Tom Lee
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

RE: Opposition to SB 664 – Verification of Employment Eligibility

Dear Senator Lee:

The overarching goals of mandating employment verification may be meritorious in ensuring an eligible workforce and providing workers and employers with a transparent process. However, we must oppose mandating the use of E-Verify unless done so as part of federal, comprehensive immigration reform.

E-Verify is an inaccurate system

Since its inception, E-Verify has experienced challenges, which have negatively affected businesses and U.S. workers. A significant challenge has been system-generated errors which have caused otherwise-eligible workers, the majority of whom are citizens, to be incorrectly disqualified from work. An estimated 15% of all E-Verify queries result in a false FNC (final non-confirmation).¹

Current employment visa system does not comport with economic demand for migrant labor

Over the past several decades, the demand by U.S. businesses for low-skilled workers has grown exponentially, while the supply of available workers for low-skilled jobs has diminished. Yet, for low-skilled workers to enter the United States lawfully to reside and work, there are only 5,000 green cards available annually; H-2B visas are capped at 66,000 annually; and H-2A visa requirements are onerous. At their current numbers, these are woefully insufficient to provide legal means for the foreign-born to enter the United States, and thereby meet our demand for foreign-born labor.

Required employment verification only appropriate within comprehensive, federal reform

We would not oppose mandatory expansion of the E-Verify if it were part of a federal effort on immigration reform that also addresses: (1) complementary labor and employment protections to ensure that employment verification processes do not become a tool to undermine workplace rights or take advantage of workers' vulnerabilities; (2) expansion of legal avenues for low wage workers to enter the U.S. lawfully and work in humane conditions; (3) curbing employer efforts to misuse employment verification programs; and (4) improvement of the inaccuracies of the E-Verify system.

In its current form as a state-based, piecemeal attempt to address a federal concern, we oppose SB 664. Thank you for your consideration of our concerns. We are available to discuss them further at your request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Michael B. Sheedy".

Michael B. Sheedy

cc: Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee
Most Reverend Thomas G. Wenski, Archbishop of Miami

¹ Nowrasteh, A. & Harperhttps, J. (2015). Checking E-Verify: The Costs and Consequences of a National Worker Screening Mandate. *Cato Institute*. Retrieved from www.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/pa775_1.pdf