Texas Public POLICY FOUNDATION

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 323

By: **Selene Rodriguez**, Texas Public Policy Foundation
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Good morning, Chairman Bell and members of the committee,

My name is Selene Rodriguez, I represent the Texas Public Policy Foundation, and I am here to testify in support of House Bill 323.

HB 323 is a simple bill that makes a great impact. While Texas does have the required use of E-Verify for state contractors, institutions of higher education, and sexually oriented businesses, this is a logical next step in expanding those requirements.

Because the United States has ample opportunities to obtain employment, there are incentives to enter our country illegally and/or overstay visas. A reliable and mandatory employment eligibility verification system, along with enhanced enforcement, will deter illegal immigration and therefore increase border security efforts.

Those who are ineligible to work in the U.S. due to their immigration status will often pay substantial amounts of money for counterfeit documents to falsify eligibility to work in the United States. E-Verify helps detect these types of documents, thus protecting employers and discouraging the use of criminal networks.

While critics of E-Verify have concerns with tentative non-confirmations, according to U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services, in 2024, 98.14% of employees were automatically confirmed as "work authorized" either instantly or within 24 hours (E-Verify, 2024). Of the 1.86% of employees who received initial system mismatches, 0.02% were later confirmed as "work authorized" after taking action, and 1.67% were not found to be "work authorized" (E-Verify, 2024).

According to a 2017 report by the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, "the number of unauthorized immigrants and/or unauthorized immigrant workers fell below what would have been expected absent E-Verify in five states—Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Mississippi and Utah" (Orrenius & Zavodny, 2017, p. 1).

E-Verify dissuades illegal immigration by targeting one of its main drivers: the lure of jobs. Effective statewide E-Verify expansion and implementation is part of a larger effort to limit illegal immigration. While E-Verify does not solve all the problems of illegal immigration, it is a step toward getting those problems under control. E-Verify is effective in upholding the rule of law and should serve as an essential component of a sound national immigration system. It prevents employers from taking advantage of the unauthorized workers as well as safeguards the jobs of American citizens and lawful residents (Michels & Oliver, 2021).

Requiring the use of E-Verify for all public service employment in Texas can help ensure that taxpayers are not subsidizing the employment of people without proper work authorization. HB 323 aids that effort by extending E-Verify requirements to political subdivisions. We thank you for your consideration of this bill.

References

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Orrenius, P., & Zavodny, M. (2017). Digital enforcement: Effects of E-Verify on unauthorized immigrant employment and population. Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. https://www.dallasfed.org/-/media/Documents/research/pubs/everify.pdf