

Michigan Chamber of Commerce Opposes Making Job Providers 'Immigration Police,' Urges House Committee To Reject E-verify Mandate

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The Michigan Chamber of Commerce is urging the House Judiciary Committee to reject a series of bills on its agenda tomorrow to mandate that certain job providers use the federal e-verify system to check the employment eligibility of new hires online. The bills - House Bills 4355 and 4969 - were introduced by State Representative David Agema (R-Grandville).

"This legislation seeks to make Michigan employers the 'immigration police,'" said Wendy Block, Director of Health Policy and Human Resources for the Michigan Chamber. "Rather than place this mandate on employers, many of whom are ill-equipped to handle this requirement, we believe law enforcement agencies should continue to take primary responsibility of federal immigration laws."

"Congress intended for e-verify to be voluntary," said Jim Holcomb, Vice President of Business Advocacy and Associate General Counsel for the Michigan Chamber. "E-verify, or some other form of mandatory electronic verification, should only be mandated on the federal level in the context of federal immigration reform in order to avoid a piecemeal approach to the immigration issue and headaches for firms operating in multiple states."

"E-verify cannot detect many forms of document fraud or identity theft and is, by no means, foolproof," noted Block. "As a result, many employers and employees, who may have to wait days if not weeks to resolve a discrepancy or error, will be left in limbo if the system is mandatory."

Block concluded, "Although House Bills 4355 and 4969 mandate that all employment agencies and state contractors and subcontractors use e-verify, we are concerned that this legislation is one small step away from mandating that all Michigan job providers use the system."

The Michigan Chamber of Commerce is celebrating its 50th year as a statewide business organization, now representing more than 7,000 employers, trade associations and local chambers of commerce. The Michigan Chamber was established in 1959 to be an advocate for Michigan's job providers in the legislative, political and legal process. It is only one of four state chambers of commerce in the nation accredited by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

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