



Connecticut Business & Industry Association

**Testimony of Kia F. Murrell  
Assistant Counsel, CBIA  
Before the Committee on Labor and Public Employees  
Hartford, CT  
March 2, 2010**

**S.B. 240 AAC The E-Verify Program**

Good Afternoon Senator Prague, Representative Ryan and other members of the Committee. My name is Kia Murrell and I am Assistant Counsel for Labor & Employment matters at the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA). CBIA represents more than 10,000 companies throughout the state of Connecticut, ranging from large corporations to small businesses, but the vast majority of our members are small businesses of fifty or fewer employees. CBIA generally opposes legislation that increases the costs of doing business in the state; creates new administrative burdens for employers; or restricts employers' flexibility when managing their workforces and making personnel decisions. For these reasons, we object to **S.B. 240** and urge the Committee to reject this legislation.

**S.B. 240** provides that after Jan. 1, 2011, any employer who employs 50 or more employees must register with and utilize the federal E-Verify system to verify the work eligibility status of each newly hired employee. The E-Verify system is an Internet-based system administered by the federal government which relies on information reported on an employee's I-9 Form (the Employment Eligibility Verification form) to determine if an employee is eligible to work in the country. Registration and compliance with the E-Verify system is required for many federal contractors and subcontractors, but **only a small minority of states mandate the use of E-Verify by employers.**

The purpose of E-Verify is to prevent employers from unknowingly hiring illegal immigrants by allowing them to verify immigration status. However, the system has been riddled with problems that undermine its effectiveness since it began.

Specifically, **the E-Verify system has been plagued with problems such as**

- **Data information errors**
- **Computer system malfunctions**
- **Erroneously reported Social Security information**
- **Failure to detect fraudulent information on I-9 forms**

In fact, just last week it was widely reported that a study completed in December 2009 found the E-Verify system to be accurate only "half of the time," in that it wrongly cleared illegal workers about 54 percent of the time. (Hartford Courant

Feb. 25, 2010) As a result of that study, key members of Congress have stated publicly that **it doesn't make sense to expand and invest in E-Verify without first addressing the many problems that affect the system.**

In summary, until the E-Verify system can be improved and deemed a reliable source of immigration status information for employees, mandating its use by Connecticut employers will only force them into a position of denying or terminating employees who cannot be confirmed as legally employable and then be later being sued if they are found to be legal workers. For these reasons we oppose **S.B. 240** and urge the Committee to reject this legislation.