



State of Connecticut

SENATE

STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

SENATOR MICHAEL A. McLACHLAN
TWENTY-FOURTH SENATE DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM 3400
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591
CAPITOL: (800) 842-1421
E-mail: Michael.McLachlan@cga.ct.gov
WEB SITE: www.SenatorMcLachlan.cga.ct.gov

MINORITY WHIP

RANKING MEMBER
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS
COMMITTEE

Public Hearing Testimony

March 3, 2010

Labor & Public Employees Committee

Michael McLachlan, State Senator, 24th District

MEMBER
FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Re: Senate Bill 240 – An Act Concerning the E-Verify Program

Senator Prague, Representative Ryan, Ranking Members Guglielmo and Noujaim and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in favor of Senate Bill 240 – An Act Concerning the E-Verify Program.

Last session, I introduced Senate Bill 221 which would have required employers with more than three employees to use E-Verify to confirm the eligibility of their employees to work in the United States. Unfortunately, a public hearing was never held on the bill and it subsequently died in committee. I am pleased that this session the committee has decided not only to raise this important bill, but to hold a public hearing on it as well.

The E-Verify Program, which has been in existence since 1996, is designed to allow employers to verify an applicant's eligibility to work in the United States. By comparing information obtained in the employee's I-9 form to information contained within the Social Security Administration and the Department of Homeland Security databases, employers are able to determine eligibility within seconds.

If for some reason the information in the I-9 does not match information maintained by the federal government, potential employees are always given the chance to correct data mismatches. Additionally, there is no cost for an employer who utilizes the program.

Under this bill, employers with more than 50 employees (including the state of Connecticut) would be required to use the E-Verify system. As was mentioned before, there is no cost and only a minimal time commitment. If passed, Connecticut would join several other states that have mandated the used of E-Verify. For example, Arizona and Mississippi require all employers to use E-Verify, seven states require public contractors to use E-Verify and ten states require their state agencies to use E-Verify.

Additionally, if an employer uses E-Verify to determine eligibility and it is later found that the employee hired was an illegal alien, the employer will not be held liable. In addition, use of the program insulates employers from concerns over employment discrimination. If an employer suspects that a document used in the initial verification process is fraudulent, they are unable to ask for another document; doing so could be grounds for discrimination as the employer would be asking for more information than is required under law. By using E-Verify, the employer would protect themselves from claims of discrimination.

Lastly and most importantly, use of the E-verify program ensures that only those who are eligible to work in the United States are able to do so. With unemployment at 8.9%, we need to make sure that the job opportunities for legal U.S. citizens and residents are being impaired by illegal aliens.

In closing, I would like to thank the co-chairs for their willingness to raise Senate Bill 240 this session. I sincerely hope that the committee looks favorable on this bill so that it can make its way through the legislative process. Thank you.