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*FAIR is a nonprofit public interest organization working to end illegal immigration and to set levels of legal immigration that are consistent with the national interest.*



FEDERATION FOR AMERICAN IMMIGRATION REFORM

January 31, 2024

The Honorable Steven Holt, Chairman  
Iowa General Assembly  
Judiciary Committee  
Hearing Room 19  
1007 East Grand Ave.  
Des Moines, IA 50319

RE: HSB 105

Dear Chairman Holt and other distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Shari Rendall and I am the Director of State and Local Engagement at the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR). FAIR is a non-profit organization that believes our immigration laws must be reformed to serve our nation's interests.

Founded in 1979, FAIR has three million members and supporters nationwide including 6,765 in Iowa. On behalf of our members and supporters, I am writing to express FAIR's support for House Bill (HSB) 105 which would require employers to use E-Verify to ensure a legal workforce.

Americans lose out on millions of job opportunities every year because companies seeking cheap labor choose to fill positions with illegal aliens. Since most illegal aliens come to the United States from impoverished countries with failing economies, the vast majority are willing to work for any remuneration they consider reasonable, even though the wage offered may be significantly below the market rate or even below legal minimum wage. Unscrupulous employers regularly exploit illegal alien laborers in order to cut their costs and increase their profits.

Moreover, Pew Research found in 2021 approximately 7.8 million illegal aliens participated in the US labor force and according to FAIR's 2023 Cost Study at least 25 percent of those operate in the "underground economy" – that is, they work "under the table." These individuals are not authorized to work in the United States and their employers do not comply with applicable immigration, safety, wage and hour, and tax laws. In most cases, the employer and the illegal alien willfully collaborate to violate the law. In others, employers rely



on weak employment verification requirements and voluntarily turn a blind eye to questionable identity and immigration documents.

For two decades, the United States has had a simple, effective tool that would virtually eliminate the employment of illegal aliens. The E-Verify system was created in 1997 to provide business owners with a fast, easy, accurate and free way to ensure that they are compliant with federal immigration law. It works by allowing employers to electronically and instantly check the legal work status of their newly hired employees.

To appreciate the ability of the E-Verify system to accurately screen out unauthorized alien applicants for employment, one needs to understand how E-Verify operates. In the most recent audit of the E-Verify system by Verification Information System (VIS) Transaction Data, current through Quarter 4 of Fiscal Year 2022, 98.34 percent of all employees entered into the program were automatically confirmed as work authorized either instantly (within three to five seconds) or within 24 hours, requiring no employee or employer action. Of the initial system mismatches, a mere 0.12 percent were later confirmed as work authorized. This is in contrast to the current system which essentially amounts to the “honor system” – hoping prospective employees won’t use fraudulent documents and employers will catch them if they do—which essentially has a 100 percent chance of missing at least some unauthorized applicants.

In addition to its effectiveness in verifying work authorization, E-Verify is rated very highly and positively by employers who use it. In a 2021 survey of customer satisfaction by CFI Group, E-Verify received an average score of 88 out of 100 from all new and existing users. Moreover, E-Verify is operated and maintained by the federal government, in a partnership between the Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration. It costs nothing for an employer or prospective employee to use. Likewise, it costs nothing to the states that require it.

With 7.4 percent of the U.S. workforce currently unemployed or underemployed as of November 2022, those who are lawfully permitted to work in this country deserve every opportunity to find jobs without competing against illegal aliens willing to work for sub-standard wages. Requiring employers to use E-Verify is therefore smart public policy because it not only protects employers from

violating the law – it protects American workers from unfair job competition and wage depression.

Fore the aforementioned reasons, FAIR urges you to support HSB 105. Thank you for the opportunity to provide our input. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me, if I may be of assistance. I may be reached by email at [srendall@fairus.org](mailto:srendall@fairus.org) or by phone at 202-328-7004.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shari Rendall". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of "Shari" and "Rendall" being capitalized and prominent.

Shari Rendall