

Affiliated Construction Trades Ohio Foundation Matthew Szollosi, Executive Director

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Chairman Mark Johnson Ohio House Commerce & Labor Committee 41 S. High Street Columbus, OH 43215

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Lear, Ranking Member McNally, and members of the House Commerce & Labor Committee:

Please be advised that the Affiliated Construction Trades Ohio Foundation ("ACT Ohio") is a 50l(c)(5) organization created to help foster economic and industrial development opportunities, and to promote industry-best practices for Ohio's public and private construction. ACT Ohio currently has 145 local affiliates across the state, who in the aggregate represent more than 98,000 building trades members. On behalf of our organization, I am here to testify in favor of HB 246.

E-Verify is an internet-based system that is jointly administered by the United States Department of Homeland Security and Social Security Administration under 8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a) to determine a newly-hired employee's employment eligibility.

It is free.

E-Verify is extremely accurate.

The response time is typically 3 to 5 seconds.

It is proven to work.

As reported at a recent NCSL forum in Arlington, Virginia, states that have implemented mandatory E-Verify for all employers have seen the presence of undocumented migrants illegally seeking jobs without authorization to work reduced up to 83%

E-Verify utilizes the same form employers are already required by federal law to fill out when hiring a new employee – the federal I-9 form. Here's the difference: under the *Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 ("IRCA")*, employers are required to fill out and <u>maintain</u> the I-9 form for 3 three years – it is not submitted anywhere. Under E-Verify, employers are required to fill out and <u>submit</u> the I-9 form for an instantaneous response from the federal government on an employee's employment eligibility status. This is <u>not</u> a check on citizenship or immigration status, but merely a confirmation of the employee's eligibility to work in the United States.

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According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Dept., "E-Verify is currently the best means available for employers to verify electronically the employment eligibility of their newly hired employees. *E-Verify protects jobs for authorized workers and helps employers maintain a legal workforce.*" (emphasis added)

The scope of HB 246 has been narrowed from last GA's HB 327, which passed the House 85-6, with the focus now specifically on curbing abuses in the construction industry.

From our perspective its straightforward. The Building Trades and our partner contractors invest in excess of \$65 million dollars per year on apprenticeship training – not one penny of which is taxpayer money. When labor brokers smuggle workers into the United States, pay sub-standard wages, offer no benefits, and kick them to the curb if they get hurt on the jobsite, its hurts Ohio. This abusive cycle puts Ohio-based contractors in a competitive disadvantage, compromises our ability to place apprentices on jobsites, displaces Ohio construction workers (union and non-union), and undercuts Ohio's state and local tax base. Is this what we want to continue to perpetuate?

On behalf of our almost 100,000 working men and women in Ohio, I encourage you to pass HB 246.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to present to your committee – I'd be happy to take any questions.

Matt Szollosi Executive Director ACT Ohio

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