



CENTRAL OHIO WORKER CENTER

WORKER JUSTICE • JUSTICIA LABORAL

2800 South High Street Columbus, OH 43207

Testimony in opposition of HB No. 327 before the House Commerce and Labor Committee Isbel Alvarado

April 22, 2024

Good morning, Chair Johnson, Vice-chair Manchester, Ranking Member McNally, and committee members. My name is Isbel Alvarado, and I am the Case Manager and Community Organizer at the Central Ohio Worker Center, a nonprofit, nonpartisan community organization. I am here today to speak with you on behalf of the Worker Center and the many low-wage and immigrant workers it represents. The Central Ohio Worker Center educates, advocates for, and empowers low-wage and immigrant workers in Central Ohio. Accordingly, we have provided Know Your Rights in the Workplace training to over a hundred workers so far this year. We also assist workers by connecting them with the right attorney or filing complaints with government agencies when they experience workplace violations. In most cases, we have seen how workers, especially immigrant workers, face barriers when having to rely on understaffed and under-resourced government labor enforcement agencies to remedy labor law violations.

I would like to testify in opposition to HB No. 327 for the following reasons:

1. Mandatory E-Verify puts the low-wage and immigrant workers we represent in a disadvantageous position of losing their jobs or not being able to get a job because of the erroneous matches the government will inevitably make. Erroneous matches under an E-Verify mandate will harm U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, and work-authorized noncitizens. For example, it will disproportionately affect immigrant communities who often use two surnames, one from the father and one from the mother plus uncommon names for government officials which increase the possibility of errors. This is not just a theoretical concern—we have already interacted with workers who have experienced the consequences of E-verify by mistakes in their names. Their stories are a testament to the real human impact of this policy.
2. Mandatory E-Verify lacks due process, which will also affect the low-wage and immigrant workers we represent the most. When workers are notified that the information they have provided doesn't match the information in E-Verify's databases, they face significant burdens trying to correct their records. Workers' only option is to file an informal plea to a government office, with no appeal process or a process for a formal reconsideration. Low-wage and immigrant workers can not give themselves the luxury of losing work days and making multiple trips to a government office to correct errors.
3. Mandatory E-Verify will not be effective. We know undocumented workers are going to get hired either way in the underground economy, which will put them in the position of being more severely exploited. This will also hurt other workers, driving down wages and standards.
4. Mandatory E-Verify does not help Central Ohio workers' needs. The population of Central Ohio is expected to continue growing, reaching 3.15 million residents by 2050, as are the workers in



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the area to accommodate such growth. Mandatory E-Verify's systemic flaws and ineffectiveness act against our community's needs.

We strongly oppose this legislation, which has many flaws, is ineffective and will disproportionately affect the low wage and immigrant workers we represent. The potential harm that HB No. 327 could cause is a matter of great concern, and we urge you to consider the implications carefully.