

# What Are Faith-based Advocates Saying about a Mandatory Basic Pilot/E-Verify?

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All American communities would be severely impacted if the Basic Pilot/E-Verify employment eligibility verification program were made mandatory. Every worker in the U.S., regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, political affiliation or beliefs, would be subject to verification through the program. Faith-based advocates largely agree that a mandatory Basic Pilot/E-Verify runs counter to respecting and preserving the dignity of all people and the best interests of families and workers.<sup>1</sup>

## Protection of Families and the Dignity of All Workers

[We have] consistently stated that immigration reform must include four basic principles: protecting and uniting families, protecting human rights and worker rights, ending marginalization and providing a path to permanence.... [Under a mandatory Basic Pilot/E-Verify,] hardworking individuals will have to expend significant resources to overcome major bureaucratic hurdles that may take weeks or months, during which they would be at risk of layoff or termination. — Lutheran Immigrant & Refugee Services, Feb. 11, 2008

Both our Judeo-Christian values and the undeniable truth of our great nation's immigrant identity teach us that we must treat those strangers entering our country with

the utmost dignity and respect while recognizing the immense contributions and value they bring to our culture and society. Legislation [that includes a mandatory Basic Pilot/E-Verify] negates this premise through half-formed, reactionary policies that do more harm than good in fixing the broken immigration system in our country.

— NETWORK, a National Catholic Social Justice Lobby, April 24, 2008

[T]he Sisters of the Good Shepherd receive our mission from our foundress, St. Mary Euphrasia: to emphasize the individual worth of every human being. [A mandatory Basic Pilot/E-Verify] would place in jeopardy the jobs of an estimated 12.7 million U.S. citizen workers whose information appears incorrectly in the database. The Social Security Administration faces an enormous responsibility as our largest generation yet heads toward retirement. Adding to its burden, this unreasonable duty will inevitably hurt thousands of U.S. citizens.

— National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, April 22, 2008

## Costs to Communities, Workers, and the Economy

[The] principles of comprehensive immigration reform not only provide for the only reasonable way to repair our broken immigration system; they also reflect our

Christian faith that we should welcome strangers in our land.... [A mandatory Basic Pilot/E-Verify] betrays these principles by imposing enormous and unnecessary costs on businesses by requiring all employers to use a flawed system to verify that every single worker is authorized to work in the United States.

—General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church

It is our communities that are under siege following the failure of Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform.... \$2.5 billion in additional administrative costs for business will only lead to further cutbacks in employment. Rather than adding jobs, we will lose jobs.

— Rev. Luis Cortés, President, Esperanza, April 9, 2008

[W]e believe that effective reform must fix what is broken in the system, before implementing harsher enforcement measures.... Workers already struggling to make ends meet, including single mothers and low-wage workers, will be hardest hit. [The mandatory Basic Pilot/E-Verify program as proposed by the SAVE Act] contains no assurances that government databases will be accurate and updated, no privacy protections for the vast amounts of personal information to be handled by employers, and no recourse for workers who are wrongfully denied employment.<sup>2</sup>

— Friends Committee on National Legislation, April 7, 2008



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If [a mandatory Basic Pilot/E-Verify] is enacted, millions of legal workers, including U.S. citizens, could lose their jobs by mistake. Meanwhile, undocumented immigrants will go further underground, leading to greater exploitation of undocumented workers, lower tax revenues, and the further erosion of wages and working conditions for all.

— Jewish Council for Public Affairs, April 11, 2008

No employer verification system can be a panacea for the immigration and security challenges America faces. Sadly, the flawed system [known as Basic Pilot/E-Verify] would jeopardize the employment of citizens and legal immigrants, expose millions of workers to discrimination and exploitation, and have a crippling effect on the U.S. economy.

— American Jewish Committee, April 11, 2008

Rather than providing a workable solution to a complex problem, [mandatory electronic employment eligibility verification] will result in confusion in the workplace, economic insecurity, hardship for low-wage workers, and violations of workers' rights.... [T]he E-Verify program has been extensively misused by employers who have penalized workers based on incorrect database findings.

— Interfaith Worker Justice, April 24, 2008

## The Dangers of Database Inaccuracies, Discrimination, and Wrongful Termination

The Jesuit Conference agrees that enforcement of immigration laws is a critical linchpin to establishing an immigration system that respects the rule of law and regularizes foreign workers. However, the expansion of the Basic Pilot/Employee Verification System to all employers nationwide . . . would put legal residents and American citizens at risk of wrongful termination due to the high error rate in the database upon which it relies. Until we reform the immigration system to provide more legal venues for employers to hire the workers they need through a temporary worker program, employee verification will prove only frustrating to employers, harmful to employees, and detrimental to our economy.

— Provincials of the Society of Jesus in the United States, The Jesuit Conference, April 14, 2008

Enforcement of our nation's borders is essential, as is holding employers accountable for hiring undocumented workers. However . . . [f]orcing employers to verify eligibility status of their workers before this database is updated could jeopardize the jobs of millions of U.S.-born and immi-

grant workers alike, whose information has been entered incorrectly in the system.

— Sojourners, April 17, 2008

[A mandatory Basic Pilot/E-Verify] would also threaten the authorized employment of thousands of workers. As a result of racial discrimination in hiring practices, people of color would be particularly affected.... People of color and especially Latino/as stand to be particularly hard hit by misidentification, as there are no safeguards in place to prevent employers from practicing racial profiling and checking potential employees against the database before hiring.

— Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, April 18, 2008

Rather than comprehensively addressing the problems with our immigration laws, [a mandatory Basic Pilot/E-Verify] heaps more dysfunction on a broken system by . . . fortifying a system that does not effectively and realistically address the growing undocumented population. By expanding the existing Basic Pilot employment [eligibility] verification system without first resolving its many well-documented flaws, the SAVE Act places the jobs of an estimated 12.7 million U.S. citizens, whose information appears in the database incorrectly, in jeopardy.

— Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, April 7, 2008

### FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT

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<sup>1</sup> More information about Basic Pilot/E-Verify and electronic employment eligibility verification systems generally is available at [www.nilc.org/immseplymnt/ircaempverif/index.htm#eevs](http://www.nilc.org/immseplymnt/ircaempverif/index.htm#eevs).

<sup>2</sup> The SAVE Act is the Secure America through Verification and Enforcement Act of 2007 (HR 4088 / S. 2368). For more information, see [www.nilc.org/immseplymnt/ircaempverif/index.htm#bp4](http://www.nilc.org/immseplymnt/ircaempverif/index.htm#bp4).