



PRESS RELEASE

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SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS WARN MANDATORY E-VERIFY WOULD BE BAD FOR BUSINESSES, URGE COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM INSTEAD

Small businesses would bear brunt of E-Verify costs; program would cost 800,000 eligible workers their jobs and \$17 billion in lost tax revenues

Washington, DC – On Tuesday, House Judiciary Committee Chairman Lamar Smith filed a legislative proposal to expand the current “E-Verify” system and make it a mandatory program for all employers and all workers in the U.S. The Judiciary Committee’s Subcommittee on Immigration Policy and Enforcement will hold a hearing on the topic on Wednesday morning.

In response to the new proposal, the Main Street Alliance released the following statements from small business owners in New Jersey, Oregon, and Maine who serve on its national Steering Committee:

Kelly Conklin, owner of **Foley-Waite Associates**, a custom woodworking business in **Bloomfield, New Jersey**:

“The current broken immigration system is failing our businesses, failing our economy, and failing our country. That’s something we can all agree on. But a mandatory E-Verify program is not the solution. Mandatory E-Verify is a triple whammy – bad for small businesses, bad for our employees, it’s even bad for the federal budget.

“Until we are willing to put aside ideological axe-grinding and begin an honest discussion about comprehensive immigration reform, we will never fix the system now failing our businesses.”

Jim Houser, owner of **Hawthorne Auto Clinic**, an auto repair shop in **Portland, Oregon**:

“When it comes to the so-called ‘E-Verify’ program, the ‘E’ must stand for Error. If we make this error-ridden program mandatory, it’s going to take 800,000 people and wrongly put them out of work. And it’s going to make another 3 million people waste time and money to get mistakes corrected. How is that good for small businesses or the economy?”

Melanie Collins, owner of **Melanie’s Home Childcare**, a childcare business in **Falmouth, Maine**:

“We can and must do better – for our businesses, our economy, and the country’s balance sheet. What we need is a comprehensive reform of the immigration system, not expansion of a piecemeal and flawed program like E-Verify that forces small business owners to act as immigration agents and creates new costs both for our businesses and for the country.”

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The Main Street Alliance is a national network of state-based small business coalitions. MSA creates opportunities for small business owners to speak for themselves in issues that matter to their businesses and their local economies.

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