



Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

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June 6, 2011

Mayor Micah Cawley
City of Yakima
129 North Second Street
Yakima, WA 98901

Dear Mayor Cawley:

On behalf of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO, I am recommending that you do not pass the resolution before you that would require contractors and vendors for general services over \$2,500, Public Works Contracts over \$5,000 and the City itself to enroll and participate in the Federal E-Verify employment eligibility system.

There is absolutely no question that the United States needs to step up and act on Comprehensive Immigration Reform. In the absence of national reform we face the uncertainties of a legally dubious patchwork quilt of policies at the state and local levels that will unnecessarily discriminate against many immigrant workers and have a negative impact on many businesses and our local communities. While the Federal E-Verify system is offered up to all who want to use it, in the absence of a system for legalizing current undocumented workers, E-Verify leads to discriminatory and costly decisions.

1. The Federal E-Verify system remains unreliable. According to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman, the most frequently cited database errors are "issued on work-authorized individuals". There remains a high rate of erroneous tentative non-confirmation findings, which lead to significant cost burdens to workers and job loss. It is estimated that if E-Verify were used on a national basis that over three-quarters of a million workers per year would lose their jobs, even though they were legally entitled to work in the US. For those who are able to correct the mistake, lost days of work and pay are the result. According to a survey done by the Department of Homeland Security in the State of Arizona, "54% of unauthorized workers were erroneously confirmed as being work-authorized."

Too much hangs in the balance, to require the use of a system that is still not reliable.

faxed + emailed 6/11

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1. Employers who find the process burdensome will continue to violate Federal immigration law through a process of moving workers off the books, lowering state and federal payroll tax revenues. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that over the next decade there will be a drop in federal tax revenue of \$17.3 billion due to employers shifting workers off the books. Workers pay the further price of not being covered under state unemployment insurance and workers' compensation, exposing themselves and our communities to greater vulnerability.

I would suggest that while the Federal Government works to improve their database systems, the Yakima City Council join us in petitioning our Congressional delegation, including Congressman Hastings, to support Comprehensive Immigration reform during the 2011 Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeffrey G. Johnson
President

JGJ:jh
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