



October 16, 2007

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

As the Senate prepares to vote on various appropriations measures, we are writing to alert you to a series of policy “riders” we believe should be removed from final legislation.

The riders in question would require federal contractors, as a condition of receiving a contract, to participate in the “Basic Pilot” employment verification system. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has recently renamed the program “E-Verify,” but it remains a pilot program with significant challenges.

We endorse the concept of a secure, reliable electronic employment verification system. However, Basic Pilot is not ready to meet the challenge of *immediately* increasing its participant level to include an estimated 200,000 federal contractors – more than a 10-fold increase over current usage. Basic Pilot’s significant “non-confirmation” rate would result in the erroneous rejection of significant numbers of U.S. citizens and permanent residents, resulting in a lengthy bureaucratic ordeal for many, while adding an enormous burden on the Social Security Administration.

Rather than mandating immediate participation we believe the best course of action is for the General Accountability Office to review the program and make recommendations to the DHS on how to improve the Basic Pilot program to ensure it is both reliable and efficient, and that it will be ready to handle a significant increase in usage.

The undersigned organizations therefore urge that the Senate strike the House riders from the following appropriations bills:

H.R. 3161 – Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration

H.R. 3093 – Commerce, Justice, Science

H.R. 3043 – Labor, Health and Human Services, Education

H.R. 3074 – Transportation, Housing and Urban Development

In addition, a similar rider to the Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill, which has passed both houses of Congress, should be removed in conference committee.

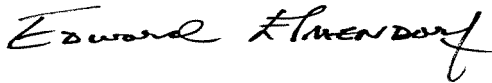
The desire to proactively deter illegal immigration by ending unauthorized employment is both understandable and laudable. However, moving too fast to require participation in a program before it is ready for such an expansion will not end unauthorized

employment, but will add to the growing perception that the government is unable to enforce our nation's immigration laws.

Since the program remains a pilot, Basic Pilot is set to expire at the end of 2008. This presents Congress with an opportunity to use the regular legislative process to transform the out-dated program into an appropriate employment verification system our country needs. If carefully designed to incorporate state-of-the-art technologies, a federal electronic employment verification system can become a vital tool in ensuring that only authorized workers are added to U.S. payrolls. Congress should not shortcut the deliberative process to require participation in what was designed as a voluntary program.

For further information, please contact Mike Aitken, Director of Governmental Affairs, Society for Human Resource Management, at 703-535-6027.

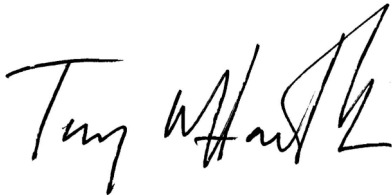
Respectfully submitted,



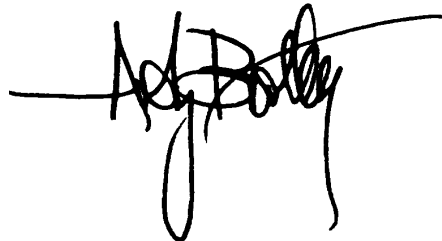
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American Association of State Colleges
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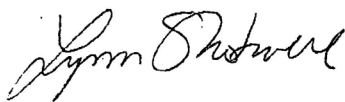
John Vaughn
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Terry Hartle
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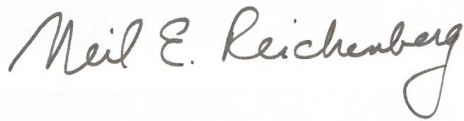
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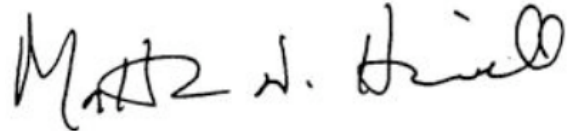
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