



ENSURING A LEGAL WORKFORCE IN KENTUCKY

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PROMOTING AND STRENGTHENING EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION

The ability to obtain a job in the U.S. is one of the primary drivers of illegal immigration. Millions of illegal aliens currently work in the U.S. because the existing paper-based Form I-9 verification process is easy to [exploit](#), and human resources personnel are not experts in detecting forged documents. As a result, wages and job opportunities for many Americans are [harmed](#).

States can act now to combat illegal immigration and ensure a legal workforce by requiring employers in their state to use E-Verify, a free web-based [system](#) that allows them to confirm the eligibility of their employees to work in the U.S. States should also establish criminal and civil penalties for employers who are found to hire illegal aliens, such as mandatory business license suspensions.

TOPLINE

- As of [2023](#), Kentucky had 75,000 illegal aliens living within the state.
- In November 2024, Kentucky had an unemployment rate of [5.1%](#). Kentucky has the fifth-highest unemployment rate in the country.
- A [2022](#) study found that illegal aliens in Kentucky make up 1.6% of its workforce. It also found that 35,000 illegal aliens were employed within the state, with a significant number working in the manufacturing industry.
- The majority of illegal aliens have only a high school education and are [heavily represented](#) in low-skill jobs, displacing millions of American [workers](#).

AFPI SUPPORTS THIS POLICY AT THE STATE LEVEL BECAUSE...

- **It Deters Illegal Immigration:** The largest pull factor for illegal aliens is the ability to make money in the U.S. Mandatory use of E-Verify would significantly reduce the ability of illegal aliens to work, and over time, this action will help reduce the pull factor of employment for those who enter the country unlawfully.
- **It Gets Americans Back into the Labor Market and Increases Wages:** Fewer illegal aliens in the labor market will present Americans with new employment opportunities. Additionally, wages in certain job categories will likely rise.
- **It Holds Businesses Accountable to the Law:** A functioning labor market requires that all employers play by the rules. E-Verify prevents an employer from using illegal alien labor to reduce costs and maximize profit margins over competitors. Employers who use E-Verify are not punished if the system fails to identify an unauthorized worker.

