

2020 -- S 2477

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

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A N A C T

RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS

Introduced By: Senators Morgan, and Rogers

Date Introduced: February 13, 2020

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 28 of the General Laws entitled "LABOR AND LABOR  
2 RELATIONS" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 6.15

4 E-VERIFY COMPLIANCE

5 **28-6.15-1. Legislative declaration -- Definitions -- Employee's work eligibility status**  
6 **-- Federal basic employment verification pilot program -- Department of labor and**  
7 **employment -- Duties.**

8 (a) The general assembly hereby finds and determines that:

9 (1) Ensuring that Rhode Island employers employ persons eligible to work within Rhode  
10 Island is an issue of statewide concern.

11 (2) It is in the best interest of the employers in Rhode Island for all employers to follow  
12 federal law as it applies to the hiring of persons who are authorized to work in the United States.

13 (3) Employers who violate the federal employment laws with respect to the hiring of  
14 persons who are unauthorized to work in the United States, place an undue economic burden on  
15 employers who attempt to hire only persons who are authorized to work in the United States.

16 (b) The general assembly further finds and determines that it is in the best interest of the  
17 state for all employers to verify the employment authorization of newly hired employees and that  
18 it is important that every employer in the state of Rhode Island apply for participation in the  
19 federal electronic employment authorization verification program, known as E-Verify, or any

1 successor program for the purpose of verifying the work eligibility status of newly hired  
2 employees.

3 (c) As used in this chapter:

4 (1) "Employee" means any individual for whom an employer is required to file a form W-  
5 2 wage and tax statement with the federal Internal Revenue Service.

6 (2) "Employer" means a person transacting business in Rhode Island who, at any time,  
7 employs three (3) or more persons to perform services of any nature and who has control of the  
8 payment of wages for such services or is the officer, agent, or employee of the person having  
9 control of the payment of wages; except that "Employer" does not include the federal  
10 government, another state or a political subdivision of another state, but does include the state of  
11 Rhode Island and any political subdivision of Rhode Island.

12 (3) "Program" means the federal electronic employment authorization verification  
13 program, known as E-Verify, or any successor program, created pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1324(a),  
14 as expanded to include all fifty (50) states in the "Basic Pilot Program Extension and Expansion  
15 Act of 2003", Pub.L. No. 108-156.

16 **28-6.15-2. Participation in the program.**

17 (a) Each employer in Rhode Island shall apply to participate in the program for the  
18 purpose of verifying the work eligibility status of each of the employer's newly hired employees  
19 by the following dates:

20 (1) An employer with two hundred (200) or more employees shall apply to participate in  
21 the program no later than January 1, 2021;

22 (2) An employer with at least fifty (50) employees but fewer than two hundred (200)  
23 employees shall apply to participate in the program no later than July 1, 2021; and

24 (3) An employer with fewer than fifty (50) employees shall apply to participate in the  
25 program no later than January 1, 2022.

26 (b) An employer shall submit an application to participate in the program no less  
27 frequently than every sixty (60) days until the employer is accepted into the program. An  
28 employer that is accepted into the program shall agree to participate in the program. An employer  
29 shall retain records for audit purposes that show that the employer has applied to the program  
30 and, following acceptance, show that the employer is an active participant in the program.

31 (c) All employers subject to the provisions of this section shall notify the department of  
32 labor that the employer has complied with the provisions of this chapter shall, within seven (7)  
33 business days of making the application pursuant to subsection (a) of this section and within  
34 seven (7) business days of being accepted into the program pursuant to subsection (b) of this

1 section. The department shall prepare and provide forms for such notification. The notification  
2 form provided shall:

3 (1) Require the employer to provide the E-Verify company identification number issued  
4 to the employer upon registration; and

5 (2) Be sworn and subscribed to under penalties of perjury by a representative of the  
6 employer. The signing and provision of any such notification which the person knows contains  
7 any statement which is false or erroneous, or defective in any important particular, and which, to  
8 his or her knowledge, is intended to mislead the department, shall have committed the offense of  
9 giving a false document pursuant to § 11-18-1.

10 (d) The department of labor and training shall provide a list of all employers who fail to  
11 comply with the provisions of this section or who fail to notify the department of labor and  
12 training of their compliance to the Investigations Division of the U.S. Bureau of Immigration and  
13 Customs Enforcement.

14 (e) The department of labor and training, with the cooperation of the secretary of state,  
15 shall put a mechanism in place to notify each employer of the requirements of this section and  
16 how to comply and shall make the information available on the department's website.

17 (f) An employer shall immediately terminate the employment of an employee upon  
18 receipt of a final notice from the department of homeland security of nonconfirmation of work  
19 eligibility concerning such employee and after any applicable contest periods stipulated by  
20 federal law or regulation have run.

21 (g) An employer who, in good faith relies on the program to verify the employment  
22 eligibility of its employees, shall be exempt from liability, or suit arising from any action under  
23 this section; provided, however, that nothing contained herein shall be construed to limit remedies  
24 or relieve obligations or penalties under state anti-discrimination laws.

25 **28-6.15-3. Severability clause.**

26 If any provision of this chapter or the application of a provision shall for any reason be  
27 judged invalid, that judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder of the chapter,  
28 but shall be confined in its effect to the provisions or application directly involved in the  
29 controversy giving rise to the judgment.

30 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS

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1           This act would establish the E-Verify compliance act which would require all  
2 government and non-government employers within the state with three (3) or more employees  
3 and the state of Rhode Island and any political subdivision thereof, to apply to participate in the  
4 federal E-Verify program and to agree to participate in the program if accepted.

5           This act would take effect upon passage.

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