



## Valdez: E-Verify's blatant hypocrisy

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October 19, 2015

Here's our national policy on illegal immigration: Kick the puppy; let the big dog pass.

It's been that way since shortly after Ronald Reagan signed the 1986 amnesty law and politicians realized how tough it is to hold businesses accountable.

It's still that way as an analysis of Arizona's mandatory E-Verify law shows.

The Cato Institute says only about 58 percent of new employees statewide are put through the E-Verify system, even though Arizona passed a law in 2008 making use of the system mandatory statewide for all new hires.

There are few repercussions for businesses that ignore the law. In fact, the Arizona Attorney General is supposed to keep a list of employers using the system, but the list hasn't been updated since 2012, according to Associated Press.

When Reagan signed the 1986 immigration reform law that provided amnesty to undocumented people living here, the deal included worksite enforcement to prevent future illegal immigration.

Border hawks like to pretend that the tradeoff was all about border enforcement. It was really about deactivating the jobs magnet. It was about worksite enforcement.

If you want to stop illegal immigration, makes a lot more sense to eliminate the reason people cross the border illegally than it does to simply make the journey more dangerous. It's a lot more humane, too.

Note to so-called fiscal conservatives: It's also a lot cheaper.

But worksite enforcement is really tough. Business hates it. Communities would hate it, too, if it resulted in shutting down businesses.

So it never happened in any meaningful way.

What's easy is vilifying migrants and yammering about the need to fortify the danged fence.

So we got plenty of that.

Some GOP presidential candidates say a federal E-Verify mandate is a needed strategy. History shows that enforcing the law against businesses will be too tough for politicians. Again.

Those politicians don't hesitate to dehumanize workers who risk assault, rape, robbery and death to cross a militarized border illegally so they can work here.

But neither Republicans nor Democrats have dared force the big dogs of business to play by the rules.