

Marantz: Many drawbacks to E-Verify ordinance

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Several articles recently appeared in the News-Leader which support mandated E-Verify for Springfield. These articles contend that the Minutemen and their ordinance are no way racist. According to the Minutemen, they are, "only trying to stop the influx of illegal aliens into the Ozarks before we look like Los Angeles . . .".

The Minutemen rely upon information from FAIR, a designated hate group [by the Southern Poverty Law Center], run by known white supremacists and Holocaust deniers, whose organizers work alongside Neo-Nazis. The Minutemen list wearing hoodies and shopping late at night as triggers for criminal suspicion.

Hispanics, apparently referred to by a Minuteman, as "brown skinned with slicked-back hair," comprise only 2.7 percent of Metro Springfield's population.

E-Verify is designed to identify "undocumented workers" who may or not be Hispanic and who may or may not be the "illegal aliens" targeted by the Minutemen.

Those opposing this ordinance are not all "la-la-liberals" but include a cross section of our faith-based community, the Mayor's Commission on Human Rights, civic organizations, Democrats and Republicans, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the CATO Institute, trucking companies and small business associations.

Minutemen cite how widely-used E-Verify is as a justification of its use, but independent research centers and the chamber have found E-Verify inaccurate, burdensome and costly. A Westat audit of E-Verify found it failed to identify people with illegal documents 54 percent of the time. The audit reports 40 percent of businesses use it improperly by racial profiling their applicants based on national origin, and they don't want to take the time and expense to verify status or train someone who may not be eligible. Businesses using E-Verify also

increased hiring under the table, paying cash, which serves to lower wages, according to the Cato Institute.

The chamber also asserts E-Verify puts an undue burden on the Social Security Administration, which was never designed for this additional level of bureaucracy. Name changes, for example, are not updated in the database, according to the Immigration Policy Center.

The ordinance is so far-reaching that speakers, convention workers (and those paid to attend), entertainment acts and crews, mission fund raisers, and technical advisers would need to be E-Verified. Businesses, universities, hospitals and churches would be subject to closure.

The Minutemen's over-simplified, inaccurate view of the ease and effectiveness of E-Verify will lead the city down an expensive path of lawsuits and sprawling bureaucracy, which will result in siphoning funds away from truly needed, urgent and unfunded city projects.

Fremont, Neb., had to raise property taxes to fund their still ongoing lawsuits. E-Verify caused Valley Park, Mo.... [to incur] \$270,000 in lawsuits.

Springfield already has difficulty attracting new businesses because of our lack of diversity. Everywhere such an ordinance has passed there has been a significant increase in hate crimes. While the Minutemen hope to get undocumented workers to "self-deport," E-Verify also chases away entire groups.

This ordinance in no way furthers Springfield's Vision 20/20 message of tolerance, diversity and inclusion nor our city's desire to increase civility.

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