Business leaders slam E-verify requirements ahead of hearing

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A band of Florida business leaders penned a letter to lawmakers expressing fears over E-verify requirements.

The **American Business Immigration Coali**tion issued a letter to Gov. **Ron DeSantis**, Senate President **Bill Galvano,** House Speaker **José Oliva**, Senate President-Designate **Wilton Simpson**, and House Speaker-Designate **Chris Sprowls** voicing concerns about requirements on business owners.

"With an aging population and staggering workforce shortages, Florida needs immigrants to move our economy forward," the letter opens.

"According to the Florida Dept. of Economic Opportunity the fastest growing job sectors in Florida include food service/preparation, home health aides, retail, and construction: all areas heavily reliant on immigrant labor. Mandating E-verify hurts all industries in Florida by making it harder and harder for employers to get the workers they need to get the job done."

Signatories include **DiMare Fresh** President **Paul DiMare**, the largest tomato grower in America, and **MBF Healthcare Partners** CEO **Mike Fernandez**, a Cuban-American entrepreneur and billionaire, along with 35 other political and business leaders.

Former Republican Party of Florida Chair **Al Cardenas** and his wife, political commentator **Ana Navarro Cardenas**, both signed. So did former Miami Mayor **Manny Diaz**.

The group makes an economic case that requiring private sector employers to verify employment status for workers using a federal database would threaten Florida's economy.

"Florida is experiencing the lowest unemployment rate in decades," the letter reads.

"With a statewide unemployment rate of 3% (lower than the national 3.5%) and areas like Miami-Dade County as low as 1.8%, we are at full employment. Now more than ever, employers need workforce solutions, not obstacles to growth and inefficient tools like E-verify."

Moreover, business leaders in their letter said they doubt the accuracy of the federal database employers would use to check if workers can legally hold jobs in the U.S. The business group cited data from the right-learning **Cato Institute** to make their case.

"E-verify has a 12% error rate and could jeopardize the jobs of 1.1 million U.S. citizens and lawfully present Floridians as well as cost Florida employers $4.7 billion to replace lawfully present workers that receive false disqualification," the letter reads. "Detrimental state policies like mandatory E-verify harm Florida's economy and our communities."

The letter came out the same day as an **economic study** from FWD.us that estimated Florida would lose 253,000 jobs if E-verify requirements move forward.

It was also the same day a Senate bill (**SB 664**) sponsored by Thonotosassa Republican Sen. **Tom Lee** is set to be heard by the body's Judiciary Committee.