

‘It’s a new day, this is a new America. We have a new American Dream.’

— PHILIP CARRASCO

“Last time I checked, I think it was a 99.6 percent satisfaction rate,” Miller says. “It’s accurate.”

According to E-Verify’s annual satisfaction survey, published by the Department of Homeland Security’s U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the 2014 Customer Satisfaction Index calculated a score of 87 out of 100.

Currently, 4,722 employers in Oregon hold a memorandum of understanding with the USCIS’s E-Verify system.

In a study of more than 30 million submissions to E-Verify, USCIS reported automatic approvals in 98.8 percent of the cases — that’s 1.2 percent with mismatches, with a 0.18 percent approval after initial mismatch.

The greatest concern from the pro-immigration camp is that a mismatch can be triggered by something as simple as a spelling error, and for those who bear atypical American “non-white” names, who are often immigrants, this can become a barrier to employment.

While 1.2 percent of initial mismatches may seem like a miniscule percentage, if implemented across the country, initial mismatches could affect hundreds of thousands of eligible workers — 1.2 percent of 300 million is over 3.5 million.

But Kendoll says a business can’t deny hiring based on an initial mismatch, and that those who experience a mismatch have up to three days to rectify the issue with Social Security.

It’s true, according to the initiative, employees can begin working before eligibility is verified, if they are hired by a business that is licensed to employ in Oregon. And if E-Verify triggers a mismatch, employees have the ability to contest what is called a “tentative nonconfirmation,” while they settle the mismatch with the federal government, during which the employer cannot terminate employment.

While it may seem like those who proposed the initiative have addressed the issue, it still requires businesses to remain in an employment agreement with someone who is unable to work due to a mismatch. This has the potential to place a heavy burden on employers waiting on results from

the federal governments and employees unable to work.

“It will keep people who are not authorized to work in our country from getting a job,” Kendoll says.

Carrasco says it doesn’t matter whether someone is here legally — ultimately those who live here are citizens paying taxes and contributing to the state’s economy and work force.

While Carrasco is being proactive in gathering pledges to deny the signing of all three petitions for the initiatives proposed by Nearman, the petitioners apparently haven’t begun gathering signatures to support them.

According to a study titled, “Undocumented Immigrants State and Local Tax Contributions,” by the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, undocumented immigrants contribute over \$11 billion annually in state and local taxes.

While they contribute significantly to tax revenues, undocumented citizens don’t benefit from any of the social services the taxes support — which is ironic, considering undocumented citizens are often accused of being a burden on tax revenues.

“It’s like that saying,” Carrasco says, “we’re simultaneously too lazy to work and taking all the jobs.”

“I don’t believe any signatures have been gathered outside of the sponsorship signatures,” Kendoll says.

Nevertheless, Carrasco still worries.

“It’s exhausting noticing all of this happening,” Carrasco says. “We have a saying: ‘Once you’re woke, you’re woke.’”

EW’s anonymous source says groups like OFIR don’t understand that they are separating families and drafting initiatives that make it increasingly difficult for them to stay together. The result of proposals like these, the source says, is “I’m always afraid I’m going to get the call that someone made a complaint and they’re taking my mom.”

By making it more difficult to gain employment, families desperately attempting to stay together will be forced to do so through less legal means.

Vote early, vote never

IP 51 would change current voter registration methods in Oregon by requiring in-person registration to vote in state, federal and local elections. And it would require in-person voting with proof of citizenship.

The initiative also would eliminate the 2015 Motor Voter law, which automatically registers eligible voters when they apply for the license, permit or ID card through the DMV.

Carrasco’s organization is still campaigning against IP 51, though Republican attorney James Buchal, one of the petition’s backers, says they’ve “torched the ballot title, and I don’t even think they’re collecting signatures.”

Carrasco says it’s ironic that conservatives, who often speak out against big government, are going to the federal government for help with immigration, asking, “How does this reduce government?”

With the primary elections ending soon, and heated interactions between Trump and anti-Trump supporters across the country, there’s no doubt it’s going to be an incendiary election come November.

At first, Carrasco thought Trump was a joke. “Now, I’m actually afraid,” he says.

Carrasco says the hate coming from the Republican presidential campaign could be motivating local organizations, supporters and hate groups to take action through such things as the initiative process.

“I’m afraid of neo-Nazis and hate groups that might actually do something,” Carrasco says of what “Trump’s rhetoric inspires.”

Still, Carrasco says he doesn’t plan to let up on raising awareness and mobilizing his community against petitions that he says are based in hate.

“It’s a new day, this is a new America,” Carrasco says. “We have a new American Dream.” ■

Editor’s Note: The cover graffiti is taken from slurs experienced by immigrants. “Respect are [sic] country, speak English” is from a Tea Party protest sign.

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