



Office of Representative Heath Shuler

Representing North Carolina's Eleventh Congressional District

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Contact: Doug Abrahms, Communications Director
office: (202) 225-6401

Rep. Shuler Introduces Immigration Bill *SAVE Act Safeguards Borders, Enforces Current Laws and Opens Up Jobs to Legal U.S. Workers*

Washington, D.C. -- Representative Heath Shuler and 74 of his House colleagues introduced the SAVE Act, which increases border security and requires companies to verify employees' legal right to work in the United States. The bill is viewed by supporters as a commonsense approach to reduce illegal immigration.

"We need to shut down the jobs magnet that attracts millions of illegal immigrants to the U.S. every year," said Shuler, D-N.C., on Thursday. "The SAVE Act would not only help enforce existing laws but could open up thousands of American jobs to workers with legal status."

Americans expect Congress to reform our broken immigration system, which threatens our national security, adds large costs to state and local governments, and depresses wages for many workers, Rep. Shuler said. But voters remain deeply divided on how to fix the problem, and sweeping proposals to fully overhaul our immigration laws have failed in recent years.

Sen. Mark Pryor, D-Ark., is offering the Secure America through Verification and Enforcement (SAVE) Act in the Senate. Both bills would boost the number of Border Patrol agents, add immigration judges and detention facilities, and give law enforcement agencies the tools they need to better carry out their jobs.

The Save Act has widespread Democratic and Republican support from Congressional members across the nation.

"The American public must have confidence that our immigration system works, and I am pleased to team up with Representative Shuler to see that it does," Sen. Pryor said. "A critical first step towards solving our immigration problem is enforcing the laws we already have on the books."

The SAVE Act would require companies to use E-Verify, a government program for employers to use to ensure their new hires have the legal right to work in the U.S. Currently, more than 100,000 employers voluntarily use E-Verify, but the SAVE Act requires all companies to use the program within the next four years or face penalties.

Instead of targeting the immigrant population, this bill focuses on companies that knowingly hire illegal workers. Employers who use E-Verify legitimately will not be held liable for inadvertently hiring workers who use fraudulent documents when seeking work.

According to an independent analysis, nearly 97 percent of all workers screened through E-Verify have been approved within 24 hours. While a small percentage of legal workers will receive what is known as a “tentative non-confirmation” due to errors in their personal information, E-Verify gives these individuals ample opportunity to correct their information with the Social Security Administration and the Department of Homeland Security databases, on which the program relies.

Even President Obama has acknowledged the need for employment verification, and in September the Obama administration will implement a rule requiring all companies that receive federal contracts to use E-Verify to ensure they hire legal U.S. workers.

While there is no silver bullet to fully correct our long-standing immigration problems, the SAVE Act attempts to enforce existing laws before trying to pass any type of major reforms, Rep. Shuler said. A comprehensive immigration bill passed in 1986 offered amnesty to those who had entered the country illegally but promised to halt future illegal border crossings.

“We all know how that turned out,” Shuler said. “The amnesty was granted, yet here we are again with over 12 million people in the country illegally and a very real possibility that the federal government will attempt to grant another amnesty. If we cannot enforce existing laws, what is the point of Congress trying to pass new ones?”

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