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Ariz. law is best on immigration

By: [Russell Pearce](#)

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The Supreme Court [struck a big blow](#) for immigration control last month by reaffirming the Legal Arizona Workers Act — which I wrote — and establishing a state's right to enforce laws against employers of illegal immigrants.

The plaintiff against Arizona was the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which has opposed every attempt at immigration enforcement at the state and national level for decades.

The chamber lobbied against the act while it was in the legislature. Then they teamed up with the ACLU to sue us. Now, the chamber is supporting an ostensibly anti-illegal immigration bill, called the Legal Workforce Act in Washington, which Rep. [Lamar Smith](#) (R-Texas), the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, introduced.

At first glance, this looks like a smart bill. It mandates E-Verify for all employers, to keep them from hiring illegal immigrants nationwide. The system has been improved to prevent Social Security fraud and identity theft, and it increases the fines against all employers.

But the bill was crafted with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other cheap labor lobbyists, [who made it difficult to enforce](#). It exempts many illegal agricultural workers; has a two year phase-in period for most employers, and makes it difficult to check existing employees' legal status.

I would still support this bill, were it not that this act would preempt state and local ordinances — like our Legal Arizona Workers Act. So less than a month after the Supreme Court supported our act, supporters of immigration control have teamed up with the Chamber of Commerce to enact preemption legislatively.

Talk about snatching defeat from the jaws of victory.

Supporters of the new bill claim that if the federal government is mandating E-Verify, why do the states need to as well?

We already have plenty of laws against hiring illegal immigrants, which the federal government does not enforce. There is virtually no chance that President Barack Obama will enforce the Legal Workforce Act any more than he, or for that matter President George W. Bush, enforced our other immigration laws.

While we cross our fingers that Obama will enforce the Legal Workforce Act, [Arizona and the other states](#) already enforcing the law will be prevented from doing so.

It all boils down to one question: Whom do you trust to enforce the law: Obama or Arizona?

Now, I want to be clear that I don't think Smith is acting in bad faith in introducing this bill. He sees that there are seven to eight million illegal immigrants taking U.S. jobs. He probably believes that he needs to compromise with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to get

something passed.

But this is just not necessary.

“The perfect,” [Voltaire wrote](#), “is the enemy of the good.” Those who insist on supporting watered-down compromises echo this to the point of cliché.

I am willing to accept “good” — if perfection is not an option. Even the slightest increase in immigration control is a step in the right direction.

But the Legal Workforce Act in its current form does not offer “the good.” We could end up with even more illegal workers in America.

Gutting local enforcement in exchange for watered down federal enforcement placed in the hands of the Obama administration can only be described as “the bad.”

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