Office of Representative Heath Shuler

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

Washington, D.C. -- Representative Heath Shuler and more than **xx other** members of Congress introduced the SAVE bill, which increases border security and requires companies to verify employees' legal right to work in the United States 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 U.S. 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. The bill also would boost the number of Border Patrol agents, add immigration courts and detention facilities, and give the Department of Homeland Security employees more tools to better carry out their jobs.

The Save Act has widespread Democrat 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 bill requires all companies to use 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.

More than 95 percent of all workers screened through E-Verify have been approved within 24 hours, and the SAVE Act provides protections for people legally allowed to work in the U.S. but who are initially rejected by E-Verify for document problems.

Even President Obama has acknowledged the immigration problem and in September will start requiring all companies that receive federal contracts to use E-Verify to ensure they hire legal U.S. workers.

While the SAVE Act is not a silver bullet to fully fix all the long-standing immigration problems, it 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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