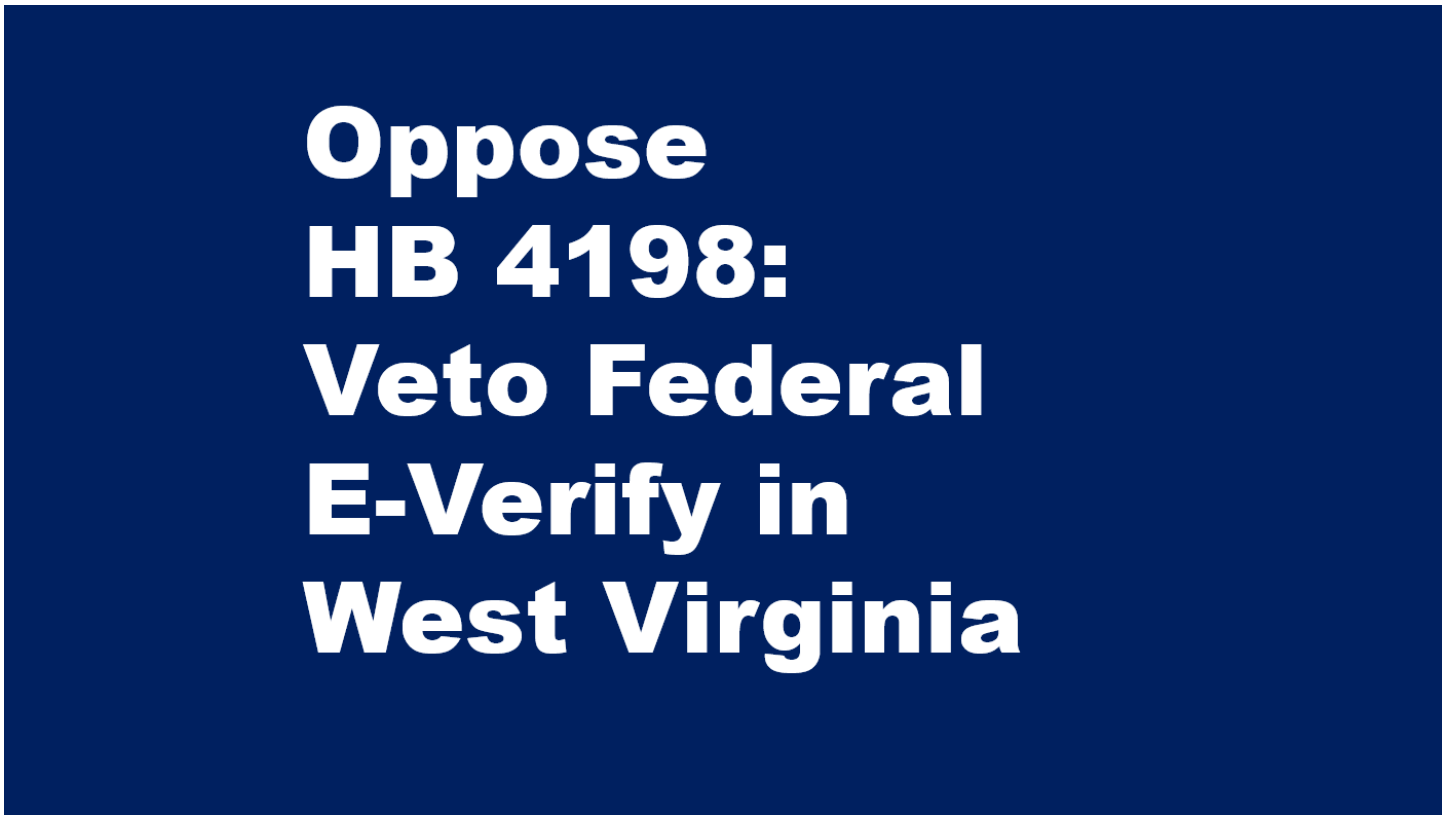
Author: D. Michael DeRidder
Date: March 19, 2026



Oppose HB 4198: Veto Federal E-Verify in West Virginia

URGENT: The West Virginia Legislature passed legislation that would mandate use of the federal E-Verify system. **Please contact Governor Patrick Morrisey, and urge him to veto this bill.**

West Virginia Delegate Elias Coop-Gonzalez (R-Randolph) has introduced House Bill 4198 (HB 4198), titled the "E-Verify Safe Harbor Act." HB 4198 would mandate that every employer in the state register for and use the federal E-Verify system for every new hire.

If enacted, the legislation requires that "all employers … shall register and create an E-Verify employer account" and that "An employer may employ or reemploy the individual only upon verification of the individual's work authorization pursuant to this section."

Illegal aliens should not be allowed to work in the United States, but E-Verify is not the right way to accomplish this. For example, it is a federally run, controlled, and dependent program — and if the federal government (or only the U.S. Department of Homeland Security) is shut down, E-Verify also shuts down.

Additionally, while the bill claims to address illegal employment, it would effectively require all employees — including U.S. citizens — to receive permission from the federal government in order to work, a dangerous expansion of federal power.

By empowering the federal government to decide who can work in West Virginia, E-Verify would also expand federal surveillance in West Virginia. It shifts the presumption from "innocent until proven guilty" to "guilty until proven innocent" for American workers, and turns employers into extensions of the federal government. The error-prone E-Verify and Real ID systems are not reliable methods to prove U.S. citizenship, and should not be enforced by state governments.

For these reasons, HB 4198 would force a one-size-fits-all mandate that puts business owners at risk,

incentivizes identity theft, turns private citizens into agents of the federal government's surveillance state.

Urge Governor Morrisey to veto HB 4198 and stop federal overreach in West Virginia.