

Florida Immigration Bill Likely to Hurt Construction Labor Market

Friday, May 19, 2023

Scott Bettridge was quoted in the *Commercial Observer* discussing a Florida law signed recently that is designed to find unauthorized immigrant workers. This law could disrupt the construction industry by making it harder to hire low-wage workers and is sure to drive up the cost of development. It has always been illegal to hire undocumented workers, but employers have often been able to get away with it. When hiring a new employee, employers are required to have the employee fill out an I-9 form, which verifies the employee's identity and work authorization. However, employers have been able to hire undocumented workers if the employee's documents appear to be legitimate. "As long as it looks kosher, companies could take them without fear of repercussions. 'Hey, we did our job — The documentation looked real; the photo looked like the person who presented it to me. It was valid on its face,'" said Scott.

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