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'GET SMART' TO AVOID RUNNING AFOUL OF TOUGHER IMMIGRATION LAWS

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Whether employers like it or not, they are in reality front-line law enforcement officers in the government's fight against illegal immigration. But employers who make a mess of their responsibilities to ensure their workers are authorized to work in the United States have recently faced more aggressive enforcement approaches by the government, including criminal sanctions against the managers, supervisors and owners of the companies employing such workers. The truth is that employers don't have any say in the matter; Congress signed employers up to serve as law enforcement when it decided 20 years ago one of the best ways to control illegal immigration is to have employers aggressively ensure new hires are authorized to work in the U.S. Whether such a strategy is effective immigration policy is anyone's guess, but current immigration reform efforts are likely to include more emphasis on the employer verification process, not less.

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