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U.S. Immigration Policy Changes Put Greater Burdens on Small Businesses

Stockton Professor's Research Points Out Why Business Owners Need to Become Familiar With Immigration Rules

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Galloway, Twp., NJ – Businesses have a stake in federal immigration policy since post-9/11 changes have shifted a greater legal burden onto employers, according to a research paper published by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy today.

Dr. Michael Rodriguez, an Associate Professor of Political Science at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey and Director of Research and Policy Analysis at the Hughes Center, has written *Immigration Policy: Understanding the Impact of a Changing Policy Environment on Local Businesses*.

His work spells out why business owners need to become familiar with an immigration policy that has been heavily influenced by national security considerations after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data by Dr. Rodriguez shows that the issue is important to multicultural New Jersey, one of six states considered "gateways" through which most immigrants enter the United States. New Jersey ranks sixth among the states in the size of its foreign-born population.

The research paper notes that private-sector hiring practices are being subject to more intense

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scrutiny after 9/11. The requirement for businesses to report on worker eligibility has been tightened, and more sophisticated digital reporting systems, such as E-Verify, are available. Dr. Rodriguez reports that familiarity with these requirements and compliance could save businesses the difficulty of being audited or possibly being sanctioned.

“Businesses should be aware that since immigration policy has come under the Department of Homeland Security, the federal government has greater resources and technical ability to check on the hiring of unauthorized workers,” Dr. Rodriguez said.

“A key change has been a shift of the burden of civil and criminal liabilities from the employee to the employer,” he said.

His paper also outlines the potential impact on businesses as local police agencies in some states take on duties related to immigration and immigrants that go beyond law enforcement. Some states are passing laws concerning illegal hiring that are stricter than federal laws.

Dr. Rodriguez gave a presentation on the growth of state laws targeting immigration at a Midwest Political Science Association Meeting in Chicago on April 13.

His research paper may be downloaded at www.stockton.edu/hughescenter.