

South Alabama is now officially back in the competition to build the U.S. Air Force's new aerial refueling tanker and the Gulf Coast is well positioned to become the nation's newest aviation corridor. Last Thursday, EADS North America submitted its official bid to build the aircraft for the military.

If EADS ultimately lands the \$40 billion contract, it plans to locate 3,000 jobs in the Mobile area where Alabama workers will assemble the huge jet aircraft. Additionally, local workers would build A330 commercial freighters which share the same airframe as the EADS KC-45 tanker. Nationwide, 48,000 jobs will be tied to the EADS KC-45 tanker program.

This is the second time EADS has participated in the contest and the third time Boeing has been involved in the Pentagon-led tanker contract process. In 2004, Boeing got a black eye when its original lease contract was marred by a scandal that sent both a Boeing executive and an Air Force official to prison. The Boeing deal was subsequently halted.

When the Pentagon decided to open up a new tanker contract to bids in 2005, EADS teamed up with Northrop Grumman to challenge Boeing. However, after Boeing's protest, the decision to award the contract to the Northrop Grumman/EADS team was overturned and a new round of requests for proposals (RFP) was issued by the Air Force.

Contracting issues aside, U.S. military aviators have literally been flying tankers that are closer to antiques in design than the 21st century refueling aircraft our modern warfighters require to safely project our air superiority and support missions across the globe.

EADS recently announced the move of 100 employees to Mobile as it ramps up its local presence in preparation for this fall's tanker contract decision.

Feds on Wrong Side of Immigration Lawsuit:

The idea is ludicrous – the federal government seeking to punish a state for trying to uphold federal law. Yet that's exactly what's going on right now as the Obama administration files suit against the state of Arizona for attempting to enforce federal immigration law.

Arizonans are on the front lines of the nation's exploding illegal immigration problem. In recent years, they have seen an influx of criminal activity, some of it spilling over the border as Mexico is rocked by drug gang violence. Many Arizonans could simply no longer stand by and watch as the federal government continued to fail in its responsibility to secure the border and enforce our immigration laws.

The governor of Arizona, with the support of the state's legislature, decided to stop waiting on Washington to act. On April 29, Arizona enacted a law which requires police in the Grand Canyon State to check the immigration status of those they suspect of being in the country illegally. The new law takes effect on July 29.

Those who oppose the Arizona law charge it gives a blanket license to stop and harass anyone who doesn't look like they belong there. Yet, the new law only applies to a person who has

already been lawfully stopped, detained or arrested. While law enforcement can check immigration status if they have a reasonable suspicion, the law only mandates an immigration check for those who are arrested. According to the law, a person is not considered an illegal if they can provide a valid Arizona driver's or non-operating identification license, valid tribal enrollment card or another government-issued ID which requires proof of residence.

Interestingly, some of the Arizona law's most prominent critics originally admitted that they had formed their opinions before having read the law, including Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, whose agency enforces immigration law and is charged with protecting our borders, and Attorney General Eric Holder, whose Justice Department filed the suit.

It is clear that rather than trying to protect the people of Arizona from cross-border crime, the Obama administration has simply sought to exploit the emotional reaction to the Arizona law to build support for its unpopular immigration reform legislation.

Meanwhile, after months of administration claims that the Arizona law could lead to racial profiling, the U.S. Justice Department's lawsuit seems to largely ignore that point. Instead, it argues that Arizona is taking on an unconstitutional role by enforcing federal law. Furthermore, the administration complains the Arizona law would interfere with its ability to conduct diplomacy with other countries, including Mexico.

As the speaker of the Arizona House recently observed, "Arizonans wish the President of the United States cared more about their safety than the criticism of other countries and international organizations."

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