

Why We Need the Employee Free Choice Act

The Employee Free Choice Act will level the playing field that today leaves all the power in the hands of corporations, not workers, by:

- Allowing employees to freely choose whether to form unions and recognizing them for representation when it is verified a majority has signed authorization cards.
- Establishing stronger penalties for violations of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) to bar companies from intimidating, harassing—even firing—workers who want to form unions.
- Providing for mediation and arbitration of first-contract disputes.

Unions have made passage of the Employee Free Choice Act a top priority for this year because it is the key to good wages, benefits, a voice in the workplace and the amplified political voice unions bring workers. In 2007, the U.S. House passed the measure and it had majority support in the Senate, but a minority killed it with a filibuster, emboldened by President George W. Bush's promise to veto the legislation. Now we have elected a new Congress that has promised to be beside us in this fight and a president who has promised to sign the Employee Free Choice Act.

Here are the facts on why we need the Employee Free Choice Act:

Working families are struggling. For too long, workers haven't had the power to get their fair share of the value they create. Workers are finding it harder and harder to stay in our homes, pay for our health care and save for our retirement. And our economy is suffering as a result.

Unions make people's lives better. The freedom to form unions and bargain for a better life is a basic human right, and it makes a difference: Union members make 30 percent more than workers who don't have unions. They're 59 percent more likely to have health benefits and four times more likely to have pensions. That's real economic security. Communities with strong unions have higher standards of living for everyone.

But the system is broken. More than 60 million workers who don't have a union would join one if they could. But under existing law, corporations essentially have a veto over the process. In our company-dominated system, workers can be intimidated, coerced and even fired by their bosses for trying to form a union. A decision that should be in the hands of workers is instead in the hands of corporate executives.

Why union members should support the Employee Free Choice Act. The Employee Free Choice Act doesn't just matter for workers who are trying to form a union. When more workers are in unions, workers have the strength in numbers they need to demand good wages and good benefits across communities and industries. That helps all workers bargain for better contracts and counterbalance corporate power.

Write your representatives in Congress today and ask them to support the Employee Free Choice Act (H.R. 800/S. 1041).

For more information, visit www.employeefreechoiceact.org