

The Employee Free Choice Act: Because We Need an Economy that Works for *Everyone*

Working people in America today are working harder than ever, yet still losing ground on wages, healthcare, and retirement security even though big corporate CEOs are making huge profits, bonuses, and raises.

We need to make sure that all workers get the chance to have a free choice whether to join together in a union at their workplace to gain a voice on the job, wages that support a family, and better benefits.

It's one important step forward our country can take toward an economy that works for everyone, not just those at the top.

- Working people in America today are working harder than ever, yet far too many are priced out of the American Dream. For far too long now, workers' paychecks have stood still while prices on everything from healthcare to gas to groceries to education go up and up.
- While working people are struggling to get by, big corporations are making record profits and are paying CEOs more than ever compared to average workers. Even failed CEOs, the likes of Enron or Merrill Lynch, are bailed out with huge golden parachutes.
- One important step we can take toward an economy that works for everyone—not just those at the top—is to ensure that all workers have the chance to freely choose whether to join together in a union at their workplace in order to gain a voice for better treatment. The Employee Free Choice Act restores this freedom of choice.
- Today we have a system where CEOs demand contracts for themselves but fight to keep workers from having a voice on the job. Companies fire tens of thousands of workers every year just for trying to exercise their right to form a union. Many more illegally pressure employees not to join together through intimidation, coercion, threats, and one-on-one meetings with supervisors.
- And today, corporations, not the employees, get to make the decisions about how workers form unions—meaning corporations control the process and can stack the deck in their favor. Even when a majority of employees in a workplace sign cards saying they want to form a union and have them certified, the company can overturn that and decide that workers have to do it all again months later. During that time, many companies try to pressure individual workers to not support a union.
- Every worker—not big corporations—should be able to make his or her own free choice about joining together in a union, free from any intimidation or fear. The Employee Free Choice Act will restore this freedom of choice and take an important step toward creating an economy in our country that works for everyone. It will:
 - allow all workers the freedom to form unions;
 - ensure that workers, not corporations, choose how to form a union, by majority sign-up or an election;
 - prevent corporations from illegally intimidating and firing workers who try to form unions, but imposing stiff fines on companies that break the law; and
 - give workers the same freedoms to negotiate their contracts that CEOs already have.

Frequently Asked Questions about Employee Free Choice

What does the employee free choice act do?

The Employee Free Choice Act will make it easier for people to achieve the American Dream by ensuring workers can unite on the job for wages and benefits that support a family. We have serious problems in our country right now and we need real solutions to create an economy that works for everyone. But when workers join together to improve their jobs, too many corporations deny their freedom to form a union by illegally intimidating and even firing workers. So this will solve that by making it easier for workers to unite on the job, imposing stiff penalties for corporations who fire or intimidate workers who try to form unions, and giving workers a seat at the table so they can negotiate their contracts just like CEOs do.

What's wrong with our current laws?

Our current laws are outdated and protect the status quo economy because they are stacked toward large corporations over workers. Tens of thousands of workers in America are fired every year for trying to form a union. Even more face illegal intimidation and coercion from employers. Even when a majority of employees in a workplace sign cards saying they want to form a union and have them certified, the company can overturn that and decide that workers have to do it all again months later. Many companies use this time to launch anti-union campaigns, spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on efforts designed to confuse and intimidate workers to keep them from voting for a union. Workers should be able to make their own decisions about how to form a union—not corporations. This violates basic American ideals of fairness and undermines the American Dream for all of us.

I already have a union. Why should I support the Employee Free Choice Act?

When some workers are denied a voice on the job, it hurts all workers because it brings down standards in the community. We see it as we pass up higher wages to keep our healthcare. We see it when good jobs leave our communities and are replaced by low-paying jobs that can't support a family. With more workers uniting for a voice on the job, we can build our strength to win higher wages for all workers, access to affordable healthcare, protect our retirement, and create a better future for our kids.

Isn't this just about unions getting more members?

The Employee Free Choice Act is about making sure workers have the freedom to unite for a voice on the job. Tens of thousands of workers in America are fired every year for trying to exercise their freedom to form a union. Workers across the country deserve a fair chance to unite with their co-workers and to share in the prosperity they've done so much to create.

I've heard that the Employee Free Choice Act will take away secret ballot elections?

Right now, even when a majority of employees in a workplace sign cards saying they want to form a union and have them certified by the federal agency that oversees labor law, the company can decide that workers have to do it all again months later by forcing them to hold an election. This legislation ensures that workers decide for themselves—not corporations—about forming a union. Some big corporations are scrambling to defend the status quo by spreading misinformation about the legislation. Instead, they should join with us to find real solutions to create an economy that works for everyone.

Will the Employee Free Choice Act pass?

The Employee Free Choice Act already has bipartisan support but President Bush and anti-working family senators are blocking it from passing. That's why we need to elect a new president and Congress that will enact this legislation so all workers have the chance to unite for a voice on the job and achieve the American Dream.

Where do the presidential candidates stand on the Employee Free Choice Act?

John McCain opposes giving workers the freedom to unite for a voice on the job. He's one of the anti-working family senators currently blocking the bill. That's why SEIU members are working to elect Barack Obama. Obama has pledged to sign the Employee Free Choice Act and is the only candidate who can unite Republicans and Democrats to protect our freedom to unite for a voice on the job.