



Leo W. Gerard
International President

February 28, 2007

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

Tomorrow, the "Employee Free Choice Act (H.R. 800)" will come to the floor for your consideration. On behalf of the 850,000 members of the United Steelworkers (USW) and the 57 million American men and women who would join a union if they could do so without intimidation and coercion from their employers, I ask that you vote YES on this legislation that will improve the lives of millions of Americans, and vote NO on any amendment that serves to weaken it.

Each year, more than 20,000 workers are fired or discriminated against as a result of their involvement in a union organizing campaign. That is one worker too many. Workers across America who try to organize do so in an effort to provide a better life for themselves, their families and their communities by earning better wages, having access to affordable healthcare, securing their retirement and ensuring safe working conditions. Unfortunately, millions of workers experience coercion, intimidation, wrongful termination and in some instances violence on the part of their employer when they try to form a union.

H.R. 800 serves to right these wrongs by leveling the playing field between employers and employees in an organizing campaign. Below is a brief explanation of how the Employee Free Choice Act would improve upon the current system:

Penalties:

Current System: If an employee is illegally harassed or intimidated by their employer and his or her employer is found guilty of this behavior, the employer simply has to post a notice stating that they have violated the law.

Under EFCA: An employer who violates an employee's rights during an organizing campaign can be fined up to \$20,000 per violation.

Why Change is Needed: There is no real deterrent for the behavior of employer's during an organizing campaign. Harsher penalties levied against employers who do violate the rights of their employees will serve to lesson the instances of their coercive behavior.

First Contract:

Current System: If a union has been declared the bargaining agent for the workers at a particular facility or company (through majority sign-up or election), employer's can delay a first contract with the union by repeatedly appealing the results. This appeals process can go on for years.

Under EFCA: If an employer and union are engaged in bargaining for their first contract and are unable to reach agreement within 90 days, the union or the company can refer the dispute to the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) for mediation. If the FMCS is unable to bring the parties to agreement after 30 days, the dispute will be referred to arbitration. The results of that arbitration would be binding for two years.

Why Change is Needed: The process of appealing union election results by many anti-union employers is back-handed coercion, as it often weakens union support. EFCA would ensure that a first contract is achieved between the union and the company.

Majority Sign-up:

Current System: Once a majority of workers have signed cards stating that they want to be represented by a particular union, the employer can choose to recognize the union based on those signed cards or not.

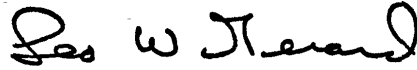
Under EFCA: Once a group of workers at a particular facility or company has cards signed by a majority of the workers at that facility (50 percent plus one), the union is recognized as the bargaining agent for those workers.

Why Change is Needed: Although majority sign-up is an acceptable means for determining union representation now, employers will often reject it in favor of an election in order to ensue an anti-union campaign. Once the election does take place, it is not in a neutral location, such as when Americans go to vote for President or their member of Congress, but on the grounds of their employer. In an anti-union working environment where workers have experienced intimidation, threats, firings and the like from their employers voting in this way does not allow for true democracy on the part of the workers.

Working people deserve to realize their dreams of homeownership, higher education, safe working conditions and a secure retirement. H.R. 800 will serve to

bring them closer to these dreams by putting the choice to join a union squarely in their hands. I ask that you cast a vote for the dreams of millions of Americans and their families by voting YES on H.R. 800, and voting NO on any weakening amendments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leo W. Gerard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Leo" being the most prominent.

Leo W. Gerard
International President

LWG/rdb