

By Senator Hill

1-02397-08

2008824__

Senate Memorial

A memorial to the Congress of the United States, urging Congress to support the Employee Free Choice Act.

WHEREAS, in 1935, the United States established by law, that workers must be free to form unions, and

WHEREAS, the freedom to form or join a union is internationally recognized as a fundamental human right by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and

WHEREAS, the freedom to chose to join with others and bargain for better wages and benefits is essential to economic opportunity and an improved standard of living, and

WHEREAS, unions benefit communities by strengthening standards of living, stabilizing the tax base, promoting equal treatment, and enhancing civic participation, and

WHEREAS, in states where more people are union members, schools are of higher quality and workers receive better wages and benefits, and

WHEREAS, union workers earn 29 percent more, are 35 percent more likely to have access to health insurance, and are four times more likely to have access to a guaranteed defined-benefit pension than workers without a union, and

WHEREAS, unions help raise workers' pay and narrow the income gap for minorities and women by increasing median weekly earnings of women workers by 31 percent, African-American workers by 31 percent, Latino workers by 50 percent, and Asian-American workers by 9 percent, and

WHEREAS, workers have often been denied the freedom to form unions and bargain for a better life, with 25 percent of the

1-02397-08

2008824__

30 nation's private-sector employers having illegally fired at least
31 one worker for union activity during an organizing campaign, and

32 WHEREAS, 77 percent of the public believes that it is
33 important to have strong laws protecting the freedom of workers
34 to make their own decision about having a union and 58 percent of
35 workers would join a union if given the option, and

36 WHEREAS, employers often do not bargain fairly with workers
37 after a union is formed and in 45 percent of these cases, first-
38 contract bargaining with the union has dragged out for up to 2
39 years, and

40 WHEREAS, when the right of workers to form a union is
41 violated, wages fall, income gaps related to race and gender
42 widen, discrimination in the workplace increases, and job-safety
43 standards weaken, and

44 WHEREAS, 78 percent of employers have required that
45 employees attend anti-union meetings, and

46 WHEREAS, each year millions of dollars are spent to
47 frustrate workers' efforts to form unions and most violations of
48 workers' freedom to choose a union occur behind closed doors, and

49 WHEREAS, a worker's fundamental right to choose a union free
50 from coercion and intimidation is a public issue requiring a
51 public policy solution, including legislative remedies, and

52 WHEREAS, the Employee Free Choice Act has been introduced in
53 the United States Congress in order to restore the freedom of
54 workers to join unions and safeguard the ability of workers to
55 protect their rights, NOW, THEREFORE,

56

57 Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

58

1-02397-08

2008824__

59 That the Congress of the United States is urged to enact the
60 Employee Free Choice Act, which contains provisions allowing
61 employees to form unions by signing cards authorizing union
62 representation, establishes stronger penalties for violation of
63 employee rights when workers seek to form a union and during
64 first-contract negotiations, and provides for mediation and
65 arbitration of first-contract disputes, and

66 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
67 dispatched to the President of the United States, to the
68 President of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the
69 United States House of Representatives, and to each member of the
70 Florida delegation to the United States Congress.