

By Senator Hill

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1 Senate Memorial

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

5
6 WHEREAS, in 1935, the United States established by law that
7 workers must be free to form unions, and

8 WHEREAS, the freedom to form or join a union is
9 internationally recognized as a fundamental human right by the
10 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and

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

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

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

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

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

29 WHEREAS, workers have often been denied the freedom to form

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30 unions and bargain for a better life, with 25 percent of the
31 nation's private-sector employers having illegally fired at
32 least one worker for union activity during an organizing
33 campaign, and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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