

HM 921

2009

House 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 choose 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

54 WHEREAS, the Employee Free Choice Act has been introduced
55 in the United States Congress in order to restore the freedom of

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56 workers to join unions and safeguard the ability of workers to
57 protect their rights, NOW, THEREFORE,
58

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

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

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