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The Employee Free Choice Act: Freeing the American Worker

Lately, non-union labor has been growing increasingly grim and somber. Consistently, job cuts, wage slashes and losses in personal leave are being witnessed. Moreover, employers are enlisting heavy discrimination against pro-union employees within the non-union American workforce through harassment and termination of employment. In 2007, in response to dissipating labor forces and the Employee Free Choice Act respectively, Barack Obama stated, "In order to restore a sense of shared prosperity and security, we need to help working Americans exercise their right to organize under a fair and free process and bargain for their fair share of the wealth our country creates." The Employee Free Choice Act has extreme significance to the American worker; providing them with an outlet for pushing union fairness and stability within their workplace through majority signup and without reprimand.

Without the Employee Free Choice Act, the rights of the American worker are extremely hindered. On average, a pro-union employee is disciplined or terminated every 18 minutes for attempting to organize a union within their workplace. With no current standard for the treatment of pro-union employees; employers are free to take any action necessary in eliminating a union push: ranging from threats to harassment and even firing an employee. Furthermore, even if a majority of employees sign up for a union, their request can be denied by the employer. If not ignored, such a request could be, essentially, permanently delayed.

One cannot blame the frustrations of the American worker in this instance. Unions provide 35% higher wages on average, appropriate and fair personal leave, employment security, and essential benefits. In the age of a dwindling economy, more

unions and job stability could be the catalyst to economic recovery. Stable jobs and sufficient wages will unquestionably promote spending and investment throughout the United States. The problem is, there are no laws set in place to allow the hard working American to make steps toward the establishment of a union in their workplace. Job security and fair treatment of employees should be a standard in the United States of America. The hard working American should have say when it comes to his or her wages and benefits. With a nation founded on democracy and freedom, it only seems reasonable that the American worker should decide how he or she is treated in the workplace. The labor force of America function as the backbone to this nation: providing the services and goods on which everyone relies. It should not be up to the employer to decide if these real life American heroes should enjoy the benefits of a union or not. Moreover, those workers should not be punished for seeking the security they deserve. Harassment and discriminations on any other terms is considered unlawful, thus, an employer should not be allowed to discriminate against pro-union workers.

The Employee Free Choice Act is the solution to such discrimination and disrespect. One aspect of the Employee Free Choice Act is it ensures that a company must bargain with local unions when a majority of its employees signs union authorization cards via Majority Signup. Traditionally, companies could simply ignore its employees' demands for a union, or administer promise of union bargain that was never met. When a majority of employees sign up under the Employee Free Choice Act, respective employers are required to bargain with local union to determine if the company can or should adopt union standards. Thus, the act furthers the democratic process available to American workers. Voices in the work setting for union benefits can

and must be heard under this act. It prevents any false hope within the workplace; ensuring that the interest of the workers be addressed or compromised to some degree. Immediate response to a majority signup means that workers will be represented in a way that is reasonable and fair.

Another aspect of this prospective law is it protects employees who may be pursuing a union for their workplace. Currently, there is nothing protecting pro-union employees. There are countless accounts of employees being threatened and fired for their involvement in pro-union vocation. The Employee Free Choice Act reinforces current anti-discrimination laws in the workplace, as well as promoting the freedom of speech. Any company known to have harassed or fired an employee based on union interest could be heavily fined or taken to civil court. This allows workers to voice their opinions without any punishment; reinforcing the ideals of freedom and self determination into the American worker. No American worker should have to settle with measly terms of employment due to fear of an oppressive management. This act will eliminate that fear, and allow for reluctant supporters of a union to express their full concern. The American worker will be able to function as an active member of the workplace; striving to make conditions fair and acceptable to everyone.

A recent poll showed that 60% of American workers would like to be part of a union. Without the Employee Free Choice Act, it is not unlikely that a majority of these employees will never enjoy the benefits of being part of a union. Fear of reprimand and loss of employment for pro-union support is invariably restricting the aspirations of these workers. Furthermore, it is likely that employers are simply ignoring the pleas of its employees. Affirmative action must be taken to reinforce the rights of the American

worker, stabilize the volatile economy, and restore integrity to the American workforce. A democratic process needs to be implemented alongside anti-discrimination in the workplace in order to meet the demands of a new social and economic era; and the Employee Free Choice Act can ensure just that.