



February 4, 2009

Alaska

The Honorable Craig Johnson
Alaska House of Representatives
State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

RE: House Resolution 5

Dear Representative Johnson,

On behalf of the Alaska Chapter of the National Federation of Independent Business, I wish to express our support for House Resolution 5. The National Federation of Independent Business/Alaska is the largest small-business advocacy group in the state.

The proposed "Card Check" system proposed at the federal level would radically alter the landscape of the American workplace by eliminating the right of employees to a secret ballot in union organizing elections. There are no exemptions: small businesses and their employees will be exposed and vulnerable to misinformation, intimidation and coercion by union advocates.

Perhaps the most frightening aspect of the proposed card check system is that it mandates forced arbitration by the government to set employees' wages and benefits. This removes both the employee and the business owner from the wage setting process. They both become victim of an individual who has no fiduciary accountability for their decision. Wages set beyond the affordability of the business will cost employees jobs. Wages set below the employee's needs limit income to the employee.

Alaskan workers and independent businesses are the backbone of the Alaskan economy. During these troubled economic times, we need to be doing everything we can to encourage business growth and fairness to workers to help fuel an economic recovery. The Employee Free Choice Act fails on both of these counts. For businesses, it would seek to force more and unaffordable red tape onto organizations that are already struggling under small margins and slumping sales. For employees, it would take away some of their most basic freedoms and undermine both their current economic situation and future prospects, perhaps including their very jobs.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis L. DeWitt". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "D" and a long, horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dennis L. DeWitt
National Federation of Independent Business



Alaska

NFIB opposes unions attacking a basic American freedom

Throughout the state of Alaska and around the country, people are struggling with the twin challenges of economic insecurity and a rising cost of living. Small businesses see this every day, both in their own lives and in the lives of their employees and customers. During times like these, it should be the government's role to encourage business development and economic growth.

Unfortunately, there are those in Congress and in labor unions who are promoting a piece of legislation that would not only have disastrous effects on the economy, but is grossly unfair to Alaskan workers as well—all at the worst possible time for small businesses in Alaska.

The Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA)—a cleverly deceptive title given the legislation's likely consequences—is a bill Big Labor is pushing in Congress to help stem the tide of declining union membership. As their desperation for more members—and, of course, dues—has grown, the unions have resorted to ever-more fringe tactics to try and recover their once formidable influence on the American economy and government. EFCA, the latest attempt, is perhaps the most disturbing yet. While purporting to represent the interests of American workers, proponents of the legislation are knowingly undermining some of their most basic rights—such as the right to a secret ballot vote in union-organizing elections.

This radical proposal gives Big Labor the green light to replace the right of employees to vote privately in union elections and replace it with a system known as "card checks." Rather than hold an election, union representatives would only need to coerce a majority of employees to sign authorization cards. Can you imagine if we elected our senators and congressmen this way?

This is not all that the bill would do. Through its other provisions, it would further undermine the position of American workers by diminishing the role they play in making the key decisions of their working lives and making it harder for them to get ahead in tough economic times.

For example, under EFCA, a simple majority of worker signatures - without protection a secret ballot -- is all that would be needed to force a company to recognize the union as representing all employees—even those who would not support the unionization of their companies in a secret ballot. Then the union gets to collect dues. In a time when we are all contending with a lackluster economy and increased living costs, is this really a fair approach? Of course not, but worker fairness is not really the point of the legislation, despite its title.

Another provision of the bill would effectively take away workers' voices on the contracts that set their pay, benefits, and workplace conditions and give it to a federal arbitrator. Employees don't get a vote at all in these cases. In addition, the decision on pay is made by someone with no fiduciary responsibility for his or her decision. If the decision puts the small business out of business, the federal arbitrator wouldn't suffer the loss of employment they cause.

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In short, this bill isn't good for anyone.