

AMERICAN LEGISLATIVE EXCHANGE COUNCIL
ALEC
ISSUE ALERT

To: Alaska ALEC Members
From: Michael Hough, Director of Commerce, Insurance and Economic Development Task Force
Re: House Resolution 5, "Card Check" Resolution
Date: February 4, 2009

The Alaska House of Representatives is currently considering **House Resolution 5**, which urges Congress to reject "card check" legislation and uphold the rights of workers. **The American Legislation Exchange Council (ALEC) strongly supports this resolution.** Card check violates one of the cornerstone principles of our republic-- the right to a secret ballot. It will diminish democracy in the workplace and severely damage the rights of workers everywhere.

The National Labor Relations Act of 1935 guarantees workers the right to a secret ballot election during union organizing campaigns. The current process is straightforward; union organizers gather initial signatures from employees to show intent. Once 30 percent of a company's workers sign the card, the National Labor Relations Board orders a secret-ballot election to be held [usually about a month or two later]. Employee votes are confidential and a simple majority wins. Stats from the NLRB show that unions win about 60 percent of these elections.

However, if card check legislation is enacted, union officials will be able to conduct open elections where employees sign authorization cards instead of voting in private. Once a majority of workers have signed a card the union is recognized. This process deprives workers of their right to a secret ballot and subjects them to peer-pressure and intimidation from co-workers and union organizers. In fact, a former union organizer testified in front of congress that she had "personally heard from workers that they signed the union card simply to get the organizer to leave their home and not harass them further."

If the proposed card-check system was used to elect our lawmakers it would be analogous to having to hand your ballot to a political party official instead of voting in private behind a curtain. Union officials can't even legitimately claim that they are pursuing card check legislation for the benefit of their members. According to a poll of union households conducted by Zogby International, between 60 and 80 percent of respondents felt that the current secret ballot process was not only fair, but needed strengthening.

Our nation's lawmakers must protect the American tradition of secret-ballot voting because it is the most democratic way to determine employees' wishes and guarantee an outcome unaffected by outside pressures. America is based on freedom: freedom to speak, freedom to petition the government, freedom to vote in private, freedom to choose and change careers, and freedom to join a union and collectively bargain for better working conditions. The right to freely join a union should be left to individual choice, not attached to peer-pressure and intimidation that forces you to sign a card.

It is with the guiding principles of protecting the right to secret ballot elections and protecting the rights of workers that ALEC strongly supports House Resolution 5. Should you have any questions on this important issue, please contact Michael Hough, ALEC's Commerce, Insurance and Economic Development Task Force Director, at 202-742-8530 or mhough@alec.org.