

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 5

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATOR DAVIS

Introduced: 4/13/07

Referred: Labor and Commerce, State Affairs

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging the United States Congress to support the freedom to choose unions.**

2 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

3 **WHEREAS**, in 1935, the United States established, by law, that workers must be free
4 to form unions; and

5 **WHEREAS** the freedom to form or join a union is internationally recognized by the
6 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a fundamental human right; and

7 **WHEREAS** the free choice to join with others and bargain for better wages and
8 benefits is essential to economic opportunity and good living standards; and

9 **WHEREAS** unions benefit communities by strengthening living standards, stabilizing
10 tax bases, promoting equal treatment, and enhancing civic participation; and

11 **WHEREAS** states in which more people are union members are states with higher
12 wages, better benefits, and better schools; and

13 **WHEREAS** union workers receive better wages and benefits, with union workers
14 earning 29 percent more than workers without unions, are 35 percent more likely to have
15 access to health insurance, and are four times more likely to have access to guaranteed
16 defined benefit pension; and

1 **WHEREAS** unions help raise workers' pay and narrow the income gap for minorities
2 and women, increasing median weekly earnings by 31 percent for union women workers, 31
3 percent for African-American workers, 50 percent for Latino workers, and nine percent for
4 Asian American workers; and

5 **WHEREAS** workers across the nation are routinely denied the freedom to form
6 unions and bargain for a better life, with 25 percent of private-sector employers illegally firing
7 at least one worker for union activity during organizing campaigns; and

8 **WHEREAS** 77 percent of the public believes it is important to have strong laws
9 protecting the freedom of workers to make their own decisions about having unions; and

10 **WHEREAS** 58 percent of workers would join a union if they had the chance; and

11 **WHEREAS**, each year, millions of dollars are spent to frustrate workers' efforts to
12 form unions, and most violations of workers' freedom to choose a union occur behind closed
13 doors, with 78 percent of employers forcing employees to attend mandatory anti-union
14 meetings; and

15 **WHEREAS**, when the right of workers to form unions is violated, wages fall, race
16 and gender pay gaps widen, workplace discrimination increases, and job safety standards
17 disappear; and

18 **WHEREAS** a worker's fundamental right to choose a union, free from coercion and
19 intimidation, is a public issue that requires public policy solutions, including legislative
20 remedies; and

21 **WHEREAS** the Employee Free Choice Act of 2007 has been introduced in the United
22 States Congress in order to restore workers' freedom to join a union; and

23 **WHEREAS** the Employee Free Choice Act of 2007 would safeguard workers' ability
24 to make their own decisions regarding unions, provide for first contract mediation and
25 arbitration, and establish meaningful penalties for employers that violate workers' rights;

26 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports the Employee Free
27 Choice Act of 2007, which would authorize the National Labor Relations Board to certify a
28 union as the bargaining representative when a majority of employees voluntarily sign
29 authorizations designating that union to represent them, provide for first contract mediation
30 and arbitration, and establish meaningful penalties for violations of a worker's freedom to
31 choose a union; and be it

1 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
2 Congress to pass the Employee Free Choice Act of 2007 to protect and preserve the freedom
3 of America's workers to choose whether or not to form unions.

4 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable George W. Bush, President
5 of the United States; the Honorable Richard B. Cheney, Vice-President of the United States
6 and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Elaine Chao, United States Secretary of
7 Labor; the Honorable George Miller, U.S. Representative; and the Honorable Ted Stevens and
8 the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S.
9 Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.