

March 1, 2007: Employee Free Choice Act

The Honorable Loretta Sanchez

EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT

March 01, 2007

Madam Chairman, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 800, the Employee Free Choice Act. Madam Speaker, this legislation is long overdue.

Under the previous majority, Congress was quick to provide tax cuts for large corporations, but legislation to improve the lives of working families was kept off the floor of this chamber.

Labor unions are responsible for almost every benefit to wage earners in this country:

Unions created the 40 hour work week, overtime pay, maternity leave, and worker's compensation.

Unions represent the people that make our country work--The grape harvesters, the home builders, telecommunications workers, ice cream scoopers at the SavOn Drug store in Anaheim. When I had that job, I was represented by Local 324 of the United Food and Commercial Workers, and proud of it.

In every sector of the economy, laborers have always looked to their unions to make sure that their interests were put ahead of the interest in the bottom line.

And it's about time Congress do the same.

Opponents of this legislation will claim that this bill is undemocratic. But how democratic is it for an employer to intimidate or fire workers before they even get a chance to vote?

Let's look at the numbers: 75 percent of employers will hire union-busters to stop organizing drives. 92 percent will mandate employees to attend anti-union meetings, and one quarter of companies illegally fire pro-union employees during organizing drives. How can you have a ``free and fair vote" with this kind of intimidation going on?

All this bill does is level the playing field. It removes institutional barriers and gives workers a chance to organize if they want to.

You know, government is actually behind the private sector on this issue. Many employers already allow for this type of organization. They recognize that it is good for workers, and it's good for management too. These leading companies have seen growing job satisfaction, better retention of qualified professionals and increased productivity.

Madam Chairman, I urge Congress to do the right thing. Let's pass this legislation and give employees a real opportunity to organize.