

CORE MESSAGE

- 1. Working families are struggling to make ends meet. Wages are dropping, health costs are rising, pensions are disappearing, and we are in danger of losing our middle class.**
- 2. Under today's broken laws, working people are powerless to bargain for better wages, while CEOs demand contracts for themselves and get golden parachutes for driving their companies into the ground.**
- 3. Workers need new laws that level the playing field and ensure the freedom to form unions and bargain for better wages and benefits. Union members make 30 percent more and are far more likely to have health care and pensions than nonunion workers. With the free choice to form unions, working people can counterbalance corporate power and rebuild our middle class.**

KEY POINTS

- Our economy is in shambles, and the wage gap between corporate executives and working people has never been wider. Corporations and CEOs hold all the cards in today's economy, and working families are left to struggle with the economy that is left behind.
- Unions are the single best tool to create an economy that works for all. Workers who belong to unions earn 30 percent more than nonunion workers. They are 59 percent more likely to have employer-provided health coverage and four times more likely to have pensions.
- More than half of U.S. workers—nearly 60 million—say they would join a union right now if they could. But not enough get the chance because of today's company-dominated system that robs workers of their freedom to make their own decision. Companies routinely intimidate, harass, coerce and even fire people who try to form unions. This is an urgent problem for workers, blocking their free will and their ability to improve their economic well-being.
- The benefits of economic growth can never be broadly shared unless working people regain the free choice to bargain with their companies for a better life.

RESPONSE TO RIGHT-WING ATTACKS

Argument: Why do you want to eliminate secret-ballot elections?

Your facts are wrong. The Employee Free Choice Act does NOT eliminate elections. We are supporting the Employee Free Choice Act because ***it gives working people the freedom to make their own decision*** about whether and how to form a union. Working people are struggling to make ends meet. The Employee Free Choice Act will allow more people to bargain for better wages and working conditions—that helps rebuild our middle class and create an economy that works for ALL. The Employee Free Choice Act gives the choice of whether and how to form unions to the WORKERS. Under the current company-dominated system, corporations can insist that employees organize unions through so-called elections on company terms, even when a majority of workers have already said they want a union. The result is intimidation and coercion—a so-called election that looks more like the fake elections in dictatorships. Workers long have had the right to form unions through majority sign-up, and many enlightened companies like AT&T Wireless and Kaiser Permanente have recognized that it's a fairer, less conflict-ridden way for the will of the workers to be determined. Majority sign-up helps companies, too, because employees are more satisfied and productive when they know they are respected. It's unfortunate, but not surprising, that many corporations want to keep workers from bargaining to get a bigger share of profits. But it's simply not right that CEOs get million-dollar paychecks while working people cannot afford the basics.

Argument: But opponents say that what unions are trying to do—get rid of elections—is undemocratic.

First, let's get the facts straight. The Employee Free Choice Act does not get rid of elections. It gives workers another way to organize with majority sign-up when company-dominated election procedures are distorted and unfair. And take a look at who's saying this—the opponents are all front groups funded lavishly by Big Business. They already spent \$20 million during the election campaign to try to block the election of senators committed to strengthening our economy and giving back to working people the freedom to form unions and bargain for a better life. Do you think they did that because they want to preserve “democracy” in the workplace? The idea that business groups think anybody will believe they're fighting for democracy in the workplace is laughable. Let's be very clear. They don't want workers to have a free choice to bargain for better wages and benefits and rebuild the middle class. They want to keep things the way they are, with corporations having all the power.

Argument: At a time when our economy is in crisis, the last thing we need is more unions to eliminate more jobs.

An economy built on income inequality—where working families do not share the benefits of economic growth and do not have money to spend or save—is not an economy that can succeed. That's the problem we're seeing now—a consumer economy built on low wages and debt is bound to fail. There has not been greater income inequality between the wealthy and working people at any point since the Great Depression. When workers form unions, their jobs go from Wal-Mart jobs to middle class supporting jobs with health care and retirement security. Years of deregulation, privatization and anti-union forces have created the mess we're in now. Academics and economists agree that unions help strengthen the middle class—which is good for our economy and our country.