

# Employee **FREE CHOICE** ACT



## **WHY DOES AMERICA NEED THE EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT?**

### **More than ever, working people today need a way to get ahead.**

- America's working people are stretched as never before. Wages are dropping, health care costs are rising and pensions are disappearing. For the first time in generations, people are very worried that their children will be worse off than they are.

### **Unions are the best route to the middle class.**

- Union members make 30 percent more than workers who don't have a union. That's about \$200 a week, or \$10,000 a year!
- Union members are 50 percent more likely to have employer-provided health insurance, and the benefits and costs are better. And 67 percent of union members are covered by defined-benefit pension plans through their jobs, compared with only 15 percent of workers who don't have unions.
- And communities with strong unions have higher living standards for everybody.

### **Sixty million people who don't have unions say they'd join one tomorrow, but too few will ever get the chance in our corporate-dominated system.**

- Companies routinely intimidate, harass, coerce and even fire people who try to form unions—and current labor law is helpless to stop them. The penalties are so slight for breaking the law that corporations simply consider it the cost of doing business. The government found that companies violated the rights of 26,824 workers in 2006 alone (and those are just the documented cases). A quarter even illegally fire workers.
- Even when workers win their unions, many companies delay bargaining any way they can. According to a new study by MIT, 44 percent of workers who form a new union never reach a first contract.

### **The Employee Free Choice Act is the change we need.**

- The Employee Free Choice Act would put the choice of whether to form a union back in workers' hands by giving them the option of using majority sign-up, an alternative to the current company-dominated system. Large national companies with good profit margins and good labor relations, such as AT&T and Kaiser Permanente, have used majority sign-up successfully for years.
- The Employee Free Choice Act guarantees that companies can't just drag their feet on a first contract. To guarantee workers can win a union contract, it provides for mediation or binding arbitration when it's needed.
- The Employee Free Choice Act levels the playing field by putting real penalties on companies that violate the law during organizing and contract campaigns.