



December 18, 2008

Re: Consumer Groups Support for the Employee Free Choice Act

Dear Member of Congress:

As the country's leading consumer organizations, we wish to express our congratulations on your election to serve in the 111th Congress, and we look forward to working with you. We firmly believe that the interests of consumers and employees are closely intertwined and that when the standard of living of workers and consumers improves, entire communities are lifted up. Corporate greed, as reflected by the crisis in our financial institutions, has severely hurt both communities. Further, the fact that so many homeowners are facing foreclosure can be tied, in part, to their lack of access to decent wages and health care benefits. It is time for Congress to address the needs of hard working Americans on Main Street and not just the interests of Wall Street.

The undersigned organizations wish to express our support for the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), to be reintroduced in 111th Congress. This legislation is a perfect example of why workers need strong voices in Congress to represent their interest as consumers. We need to reinvest and rebuild the middle class by passing legislation that will strengthen consumer protections, stop predatory lending practices, provides remedies and ensure that workers' hard earned wages go to supporting their families and communities. The Employee Free Choice Act will restore the right of workers to join together to get better health care, job security, and benefits – and an opportunity to pursue their dreams. We firmly believe the Employee Free Choice Act is good for consumers, for workers, and for American society. When workers – who are also consumers - enjoy the benefits of a unionized workforce, their standard of living rises and they can participate more fully in what our economic system has to offer.

Consumer groups believe that the Employee Free Choice Act will help restore fairness and the American dream by:

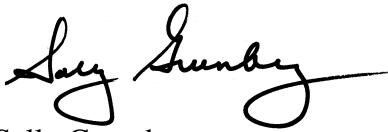
- (1) *Giving workers a fair and direct path to form unions through majority sign-up.* EFCA would require an employer to recognize its employees' union when a majority has signed union authorization cards. Under current law, management can refuse to recognize a union even when 100 percent of employees have signed authorization cards. After a majority of workers have signed cards, an employer can still call for a separate election. Under the current system, then, the employer gets to decide whether a separate election is necessary.
- (2) *Helping employees secure a contract with their employer in a reasonable period of time.* Under current law, anti-union employers often drag workers through lengthy negotiations by delaying bargaining sessions, withholding relevant information, and putting forth bogus proposals. Even though these tactics are illegal, there are no effective deterrents to prevent "surface bargaining." The Employee Free Choice Act

will strengthen workers' ability to achieve a first contract within a reasonable period of time.

- (3) *Toughening penalties against employers who violate their workers' rights.* Too many unscrupulous employers get away with breaking labor laws because the current penalties are too weak. The Employee Free Choice Act would increase penalties against employers who illegally fire or retaliate against pro-union workers.

The current crisis in our financial markets shows what happens when corporate greed is allowed to go unchecked - and consumers and workers unfortunately pay the price. The Employee Free Choice Act will help level the playing field for America's workers by giving them a fair and direct path to form unions. Consumer groups ask for your support for this important legislation.

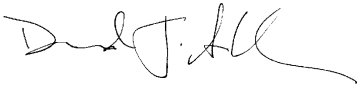
Sincerely,



Sally Greenberg
Executive Director
National Consumers League



Ira Rheingold
Executive Director
National Association of Consumer Advocates



David Arkush
Director
Public Citizen's Congress Watch



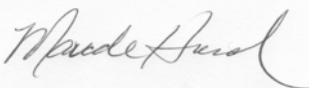
Linda Sherry
Director, National Priorities
Consumer Action



Rosemary Shahan
Founder
Consumers for Auto Reliability
and Safety



Nan Aron
President
Alliance for Justice



Maude Hurd
National President
ACORN