



INDIANA MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION
Indiana's Leading Advocate for Industry

One American Square, Suite 2400, Box 82012, Indianapolis, IN 46282
Phone: (317) 632-2474 or (800) 462-7762. Fax (317) 231-2320.

Contact Brian Burton at the above numbers or at bburton@imaweb.com

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RIGHT TO VOTE, PRIVATELY, IS FUNDAMENTAL

By Patrick J. Kiely, President, Indiana Manufacturers Association

Letter to the Editor:

The Indiana Manufacturers Association opposes the passage of the so-called "Employee Free Choice Act," which is currently before Congress. The "Employee Free Choice Act" is misleading by its name. This legislation restricts choice. It takes away freedom. What freedom does it take away? The workers right to a secret ballot.

The Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), commonly known as "card check," represents the most sweeping proposed change in labor law since passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947. It will dramatically change the union organizing process – and, in turn, has the potential to disrupt operations at both union and non-union manufacturing operations alike.

In these tough economic times, it's imperative that all employees of a company work together toward common goals. Card check threatens the ability to do so by imposing conditions that will undermine positive, collaborative relationships between employees and their employers, and also potentially pit employees against each other.

The proposed card check requires a union to be recognized if a simple majority (i.e., 50% plus one) of employees – within the proposed bargaining unit, which could include the entire company, a targeted business unit, or even a single department – sign authorization cards. This means that a union could be recognized with a large number of employees not even knowing about it. With card check, there will be no secret ballot election and no private vote. In many cases, there will be no opportunity for workers to hear both the union's and management's sides of the issues, or for employers to respond to union claims and promises.

The bill also permits the government to impose a binding contract on the union and the employer. In other words, a third party appointed by the government – not the company and not the workers – will determine wages, benefits and work rules. In addition, card check provides for substantial increases in existing penalties for employers (but not for unions) that violate labor laws.

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Letter to the Editor from Patrick J. Kiely, President of Indiana Manufacturers Association

In Indiana, this issue was recently polled in Indiana Congressional districts 2, 8 and 9. The public overwhelmingly opposes this legislation. The more they know about, it the less they want it. But even more so, in each district, union households oppose it in greater numbers than the general public.

Here are the polling results with the question in quotes:

“Do you support, oppose or have no opinion on legislation that could take away the secret ballot for workers in union elections?” Each poll had 400 respondents and a margin of error of 4.99%.

	2 nd District	8 th District	9 th District
General Public			
Support	9.75%	9.75%	8.75%
Oppose	58.25%	68.25%	71.25%
No Opinion	32.00%	22.00%	20.00%
Union Households			
Support	12.00%	8.22%	8.97%
Oppose	77.33%	82.19%	79.49%
No Opinion	10.67%	9.59%	11.54%

If union members overwhelmingly oppose the legislation, then who supports it? Plain and simple--- it's the unions' leaders who evidently can't sell union memberships on their value. We believe labor leaders see card check as an easy way to get more members and more dues money.

Even during good economic times this is a devastating piece of legislation. It is even more detrimental during our current economic downturn and should be defeated.

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The Indiana Manufacturers Association (IMA), Indiana's leading voice for industry, was formed in 1901. The IMA is a business advocacy organization representing nearly 1,600 Indiana companies and promoting economic development and the creation of high-wage jobs in Indiana.