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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 4008

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State of Washington                      60th Legislature                      2007 Regular Session

By Representatives Conway, Campbell, Green, Appleton, Hasegawa, VanDeWege, Ormsby, Moeller, Chase, Cody, Wood, Miloscia, Williams, Hunt, Dickerson, Morrell, Sells, Flannigan, Ericks and Kenney

Read first time 01/31/2007. Referred to Committee on Commerce & Labor.

1            TO THE HONORABLE GEORGE W. BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,  
2            AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF  
3            REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
4            UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED:

5            We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of  
6            the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully  
7            represent and petition as follows:

8            WHEREAS, In 1935, the United States established, by law, that  
9            workers must be free to form unions; and

10           WHEREAS, The freedom to form or join a union is internationally  
11           recognized by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a  
12           fundamental human right; and

13           WHEREAS, The free choice to join with others and bargain for better  
14           wages and benefits is essential to economic opportunity and good living  
15           standards; and

16           WHEREAS, Unions benefit communities by strengthening living  
17           standards, stabilizing tax bases, promoting equal treatment, and  
18           enhancing civic participation; and

19           WHEREAS, States in which more people are union members are states  
20           with higher wages, better benefits, and better schools; and

1       WHEREAS, Union workers receive better wages and benefits, as they  
2 earn twenty-nine percent more than workers without a union, are thirty-  
3 five percent more likely to have access to health insurance, and are  
4 four times more likely to have access to a guaranteed defined-benefit  
5 pension; and

6       WHEREAS, Unions help raise workers' pay and narrow the income gap  
7 for minorities and women, by increasing median weekly earnings by  
8 thirty-one percent for union women workers, thirty-one percent for  
9 African-American workers, fifty percent for Latino workers, and nine  
10 percent for Asian-American workers; and

11       WHEREAS, Workers across the nation are routinely denied the freedom  
12 to form unions and bargain for a better life, with twenty-five percent  
13 of private sector employers illegally firing at least one worker for  
14 union activity during organizing campaigns; and

15       WHEREAS, Seventy-seven percent of the public believes it is  
16 important to have strong laws protecting the freedom for workers to  
17 make their own decision about having a union, and fifty-eight percent  
18 of workers would join a union if they had the chance; and

19       WHEREAS, Employers often refuse to bargain fairly with workers  
20 after forming a union by dragging out first contract bargaining for up  
21 to two years in forty-five percent of successful campaigns; and

22       WHEREAS, Each year millions of dollars are spent to frustrate  
23 workers' efforts to form unions, and most violations of workers'  
24 freedom to choose a union occur behind closed doors, with seventy-eight  
25 percent of employers forcing employees to attend mandatory antiunion  
26 meetings; and

27       WHEREAS, When the right of workers to form a union is violated,  
28 wages fall, race and gender pay gaps widen, workplace discrimination  
29 increases, and job safety standards disappear; and

30       WHEREAS, A worker's fundamental right to choose a union free from  
31 coercion and intimidation is a public issue that requires public policy  
32 solutions, including legislative remedies; and

33       WHEREAS, The Employee Free Choice Act has been introduced in the  
34 United States Congress in order to restore workers' freedom to join a  
35 union; and

36       WHEREAS, The Employee Free Choice Act will safeguard workers'  
37 ability to make their own decisions with these abuses, provide for

1 first contract mediation and arbitration, and establish meaningful  
2 penalties when employers violate workers' rights;

3 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the United  
4 States Congress enact the Employee Free Choice Act, S. 842 or H.R.  
5 1696, or substantially similar legislation, to protect and preserve for  
6 America's workers their freedom to choose for themselves whether or not  
7 to form a union.

8 BE IT RESOLVED, That Your Memorialists support the Employee Free  
9 Choice Act which would:

10 (1) Authorize the National Labor Relations Board to certify a union  
11 as the bargaining representative when a majority of employees  
12 voluntarily sign authorizations designating that union to represent  
13 them;

14 (2) Provide for first contract mediation and arbitration; and

15 (3) Establish meaningful penalties for violations of a worker's  
16 freedom to choose a union;

17 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately  
18 transmitted to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United  
19 States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the  
20 House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of  
21 Washington.

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