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**Commerce & Labor Committee**

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**HJM 4008**

**Brief Description:** Requesting that Congress enact the Employee Free Choice Act.

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

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Petitions the Congress to enact the Employee Free Choice Act to protect workers' rights to organize.

**Hearing Date:** 2/22/07

**Staff:** Jill Reinmuth (786-7134).

**Background:**

In 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Among the declaration statements in Article 23 are statements that everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, and to just and favorable conditions of work, and the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of the worker's interests. In the private sector in the United States, collective bargaining rights are generally governed by the federal National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). The NLRA states that workers under its jurisdiction have, among other rights, the right to self-organization, to form, join, or assist labor organizations and to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and also have the right to refrain from such activities subject to certain limits. These provisions are administered and enforced by the National Labor Relations Board. Bills introduced in the U.S. Congress included S. 842 and H.R. 1696 in 2005, and H.R. 800 in 2007, all to be cited as the "Employee Free Choice Act." These bills would make a number of changes to the NLRA, including allowing union certification on the basis of card authorizations designating a union as the bargaining representative, requiring mediation and binding arbitration if the parties are unable to agree on an initial contract after 90 days of bargaining, and increasing penalties against employers for

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violations of worker rights when employees are attempting to organize a union or to negotiate a first contract.

**Summary of Bill:**

The Washington Legislature requests the U.S. Congress to enact the Employee Free Choice Act, or substantially similar legislation, based on legislative findings, including that the freedom to form and join a union is recognized under federal law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that this right is essential to economic opportunity and good living standards, and that this freedom to form unions and bargain for a better life is routinely denied.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.