
Commerce & Labor Committee

HJM 4037

Brief Description: Requesting congress to enact the employee free choice act of 2003.

Sponsors: Representatives Conway, Simpson, G., Wallace, Chase, Flannigan, McCoy, O'Brien, Hudgins, Campbell and Morrell.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Petitioning the Congress to enact the Employee Free Choice Act of 2003 to protect workers' rights to organize.

Hearing Date: 1/27/04

Staff: Chris Cordes (786-7103).

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 in 2003 included S. 1925 and H.R. 3619, both to be cited as the "Employee Free Choice Act of 2003." 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 binding arbitration if the parties are unable to agree on an initial contract after 90 days of bargaining, and increasing penalties against employers for 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 of 2003, or substantially similar legislation, based on certain findings, including that the United Nations has adopted labor standards under the Declaration of Human Rights, worker rights in the United States are increasingly eroded according to reports of Human Rights Watch, and federal law does not provide effective remedies.

Rules Authority: The bill does not contain provisions addressing the rule-making powers of an agency.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.