



For Immediate Release

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Congress to vote on restoring the middle class **Employee Free Choice Act introduced in Congress today**

The [Employee Free Choice Act](#), introduced in both houses of Congress today, is an essential step toward reviving the economy by strengthening the middle class.

"When working families have middle-class wages and healthcare coverage, they can pay their bills and avoid financial devastation," said Donald Cohen, executive director of the Center on Policy Initiatives. "Putting money in workers' pockets is the best stimulus for our economy."

The Employee Free Choice Act will remove [obstacles](#) that in recent decades have blocked many workers from exercising their right to form unions.

The legislation would:

- Allow workers to choose to form a union either through majority sign-up or an election.
- Greatly strengthen penalties for employers who illegally intimidate and harass workers trying to form unions.
- Ensure that once workers form a union the employer must negotiate a contract.

Research has shown that union membership dramatically improves wages and health coverage. On average, California workers who join unions earn \$2.87 more per hour than demographically identical non-union workers in similar jobs. Nationally, union workers are 28% more likely to have employer-provided health insurance.

"The positive impact of unions is well documented," said Murtaza Baxamusa, CPI research and policy director. "If the rate of unionization goes back up to where it was 25 years ago, we will pump an additional \$5 billion in wages into the California economy."

CPI is a San Diego-based think tank focused on issues of economic justice affecting working families.

The Employee Free Choice Act passed the House in 2007 but was killed by a Republican filibuster. This year, corporate interests are pouring an estimated \$200 million into front groups with names like "Workforce Fairness Institute" to defeat the act.

President Obama has pledged to sign the bill.

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