

ISSUES & POLICIES

About Card-Check Legislation



Card-check proposals are part of a national movement by labor unions to make it easier for them to organize in the workplace. Under such proposals, the current federally protected secret ballot process for labor union elections would be eliminated.

State and Federal Effort

Recent years have seen several attempts to pass card-check in some form at the federal level and in many states, including Connecticut. Our state legislature's Labor Committee has routinely approved such proposals, although a card-check bill has not yet been passed. On Election Day 2010, voters in Arizona, South Carolina, South Dakota, and Utah struck down card-check proposals that were on the ballot in those states.

One Main Purpose

Card-check bills vary in different states and change as political maneuvering takes place. But their main goal is to boost union organizing by replacing secret-ballot voting with a simple accumulation of signed cards by employees, both in and out of the workplace. Supporters of labor organizations in Congress have titled a recent proposal the "Employee Free Choice Act," a clever misnomer.

Secret Ballots Fundamental to Democracy

Voting by secret ballot is an American institution and a fundamental principle of democracy, because it protects individuals when they vote. Secret ballot elections allow a person to be honest and freely express their views away from the prying eyes and judgments of others. The decision to unionize is an important one for employees—one that shouldn't be made lightly and certainly shouldn't be made by signing a card in front of other employees.

Potential Harassment

Eliminating the secret ballot for union elections will open the door to potential abuse by those seeking to pressure and coerce employees into signing cards. In addition, union cards can be signed quickly without giving employees an opportunity to acquire sufficient information before they sign them, which could lead workers to sign union cards without fully understanding their impact on employee rights and benefits.

Added Cost

Labor unions serve an important purpose for employees, but unionization also costs employers more in wages and fringe benefits. Since union card elections make unionizing easier, card-check proposals will increase unionization and lead to higher costs for state and municipal employers—the last thing we need in a fiscal crisis and a struggling economy.

Should Be Rejected

State lawmakers should reject any effort that would take away secret ballot elections and lead to higher workplace costs in Connecticut.