

ECONOMISTS' SUPPORT GROWS FOR EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT

230 economists nationwide now urge Congress to restore
labor market balance by passing the Act



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As the debate heats up over the Employee Free Choice Act, a growing number of economists from every region of the country have endorsed the Act as a “critically important step in rebuilding our economy and strengthening our democracy by enhancing the voice of working people in the workplace.” A [joint statement](#) urging passage of the Act now bears the names of 230 economists from 33 states and the District of Columbia, from every geographic region, and from many of the nation’s leading academic and research institutions.

The [economists’ statement](#) identifies the failure of current labor laws as a key factor in producing the unhealthy economic imbalance which has generated rapidly rising inequality and has left more workers with stagnating wages, even as their productivity has continued to rise. In this climate, workers’ efforts to unionize in order to improve their ability to bargain for a fair share of economic gains have met fierce resistance from employers – up to and including firings, threats, and other labor law violations – which the statement’s drafters describe as the “war over representation.” This war, in turn, has created an atmosphere of acrimony and distrust that serves neither the parties to the dispute nor the larger economy.

The [statement](#), which was crafted and endorsed earlier in the year by 40 of the nation’s leading economists, makes an important contribution to the debate over the Employee Free Choice Act by establishing the link between the ongoing erosion of workers’ right to join a union and the overall health of the economy. The statement, with its original 40 signers, ran as a full-page ad in the *Washington Post* on February 25, 2009. This version, with the additional 190 endorsers, is [now available on EPI’s website](#).

The statement notes that the Act is especially important in the current recession, which will further weaken workers ability to bargain individually, leading to further deterioration in their economic circumstances.

The economists conclude that passage of the Act “is a critically important step in rebuilding our economy and strengthening our democracy by enhancing the voice of working people in the workplace.”

While no firm timetable has yet been set for congressional action on the Employee Free Choice Act, many knowledgeable observers expect action by Labor Day.

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