



## Text File

**Introduced:** 3/3/2009

**Bill No:** 2009-1165, **Version:** 1

**Committee:** City Council

**Status:** Adopted

WHEREAS in 1935, the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) was enacted to protect American workers' rights to organize and join unions and thus bargain for wage increases, benefits, and better working conditions with their employers; and

WHEREAS since the NLRA was first enacted, employer's interference with the process has compromised the right for workers to chose for themselves whether to form unions. Current labor laws no longer protect workers' rights to collectively bargain for improvements to their living standards; and

WHEREAS the Employee Free Choice Act, which was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in 2007 but blocked by the threat of a filibuster in the U.S. Senate, will once again be considered by Congress. This act aims to restore the rights of workers by creating a process which eliminates coercion by employers, provides real penalties for companies that break the law, and makes sure that employers and employees are able to negotiate a first contract within 90 days; and

WHEREAS statistics show that if given a free choice, millions more Americans would chose to join unions. Fifty eight percent of respondents of a December 2006 survey done by Peter D. Hart Research Associates indicated that they would join a union if they could. Comparably, only twelve percent of working Americans were union members in 2006; and

WHEREAS minorities are among the groups which would most benefit from the passing of the Employee Free Choice Act. An April 2008 paper, Unions and Upward Mobility for African American Workers, published by Center for Economic Policy Research indicates that on average, unionization would raise African American workers' wages twelve percent, or about \$2.00 per hour. African American union members are also sixteen percent more likely to have employer-provided health insurance than their non-union counterparts; and

WHEREAS similarly, the Center for Economic Policy Research has also reported that unionization would raise women's wages by about eleven percent, or about \$2.00 per hour. Women who are union members are almost nineteen percent more likely to have employer-provided health insurance; and

WHEREAS at the time that the NLRA was originally put into place in 1935, the nation was going through an economic crisis. Our current recession in some ways echoes this national crisis, and without regaining the consumer driven purchasing power that is necessary, the situation cannot improve; and

WHEREAS according to the Center for American Progress Action Fund, Pennsylvania workers that join a union will earn almost 10 percent more than non-union workers. In fact, if union coverage rates increased by five percent, approximately \$852 million more in wages could be put back into the economy. Non-union workers could see an increase in wages also, due to employers offering incentives to avoid unionization.

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NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby wish to voice its approval of the Employee Free Choice Act with Pennsylvania's State Senate and its House of Representatives.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby also wish to urge both governing bodies to pass the Employee Free Choice Act, and restore the right to form a union for millions of American workers.