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ACTION ALERT

DATE: April 3, 2009
TO: Concerned Parties
FROM: Hilary O. Shelton, Director, Washington Bureau

NAACP Calls for Passage of Legislation To Protect Workers Who Choose To Form Unions

**NAACP URGES HOUSE AND SENATE TO TAKE UP BILLS AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE AFTER SPRING DISTRICT WORK PERIOD**

THE ISSUE:

The ***Employee Free Choice Act*** will make sure workers have a fair chance to exercise their democratic right to choose a union. It does this by making it easier for a union to act as a mediator for workers if the majority of workers have provided authorized signatures indicating that they want the union to act as their representative. The ***Employee Free Choice Act*** simply lets the workers decide – not the corporation – whether to form their union through a majority sign up or an election. Under the legislation workers can still have an election if they want one including a secret ballot election. Instead of their company controlling how workers organize, workers will have the choice of which path to use.

Currently, union workers earn 26% more in median weekly wages than non-union workers; unionized women earn 31% more than their non-union counterparts, and black union workers earn 29% more than non-union African Americans. Furthermore, 75% of union workers have health benefits, compared to 49% of non-union workers. 69% of union workers have short-term disability coverage, compared to 30% of their non-union counterparts. Finally, 82% of union workers get life insurance, compared with 51% of non-union workers.

The impact of unions – ensuring that all working Americans are treated well and share in the prosperity – cannot be overstated. Despite the continuing strength and advocacy power of unions, however, some employers continue to treat workers poorly, not paying them a fair wage or providing them with necessary benefits: the purchasing power of workers' wages is 5% below where it stood 30 years ago. CEO pay has continued to rise and is currently more than 1,000 times the earnings of the average worker. The richest 13,000 US families have nearly as much income as the poorest 200 million combined. And some employers continue to fight the legitimate organization of unions. 70% of American employers in manufacturing threaten to close the plant if workers choose a union. Furthermore, in the 1950's, when 30% of workers belonged to unions, only a few hundred workers suffered retaliation for trying to organize a union; in 1969, the number of workers suffering retaliation was just over 6,000 and by the 1990's more than 20,000 workers each year were victims of discrimination when they tried to organize a union.

THE ACTION WE NEED YOU TO TAKE:

Contact both your Senators **and URGE THEM TO COSPONSOR AND SUPPORT *THE EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT***. To contact your Senators you may:

✓ **Make a Phone Call:**

Call your Senators in Washington by dialing the Capitol Switchboard and asking to be transferred to your Senators'/Congressman's offices. The switchboard phone number is **(202) 224-3121** (see message section, below).

✓ **Write a Letter**

To write letters to your Senators, send them to:
The Honorable (name of Senator)
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

**A SAMPLE
LETTER IS
ATTACHED**

✓ **Send a Fax**

If you would like to send a fax, call your Senators' offices (through the Capitol switchboard) and ask for their fax numbers (you can use either the attached sample letter or the message box, below).

✓ **Send an E-Mail**

To send an e-mail to your Senators, simply go to www.senate.gov, and click on "Contacting the Senate"; you can look your Senators up either alphabetically or by state.

REMEMBER TO CONTACT BOTH YOUR SENATORS!!!!

THE MESSAGE

- ◆ Unions continue to be an important support base for American workers and their families: union workers earn 26% more in median weekly wages than non-union workers; unionized women earn 31% more than their non-union counterparts, and African-American union workers earn 29% more than non-union Americans. Union workers also tend to have better health coverage and more access to life insurance.
- ◆ Despite the continuing strength of unions, some employers continue to treat their workers poorly through low pay and little or no benefits: the purchasing power of workers' wages is 5% below where it stood 30 years ago.
- ◆ Furthermore, some employers continue to try to dissuade workers from organizing a union: 70% of employers in manufacturing threaten to close the plant if workers choose a union.
- ◆ The *Employee Free Choice Act* will help fix the broken process through which workers form unions.
- ◆ Under the *Employee Free Choice Act* workers can still have an election if they want one including a secret ballot election.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS IMPORTANT MATTER!!!
If you have any questions, call Hilary Shelton at the Washington Bureau at (202) 463-2940.

MEMBERSHIP IS POWER! JOIN THE NAACP TODAY.

For more information, call your local NAACP branch or visit www.naACP.org

Sample Letter

(date)

The Honorable _____
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: SUPPORT FOR *THE EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT*

Dear Senator _____;

I am writing to urge you, in the strongest terms possible, to support *The Employee Free Choice Act*. This crucial legislation, will help fix the broken process through which workers form unions.

Unions continue to be an important support base for American workers and their families: union workers earn 26% more in median weekly wages than non-union workers; unionized women earn 31% more than their non-union counterparts, and African-American union workers earn 29% more than non-union Americans. Union workers also tend to have better health coverage and more access to life insurance. Yet, despite the continuing strength of unions, some employers continue to treat American workers poorly, with low wages and few benefits: the purchasing power of workers' wages is 5% below where it stood 30 years ago. And despite the tremendous wealth that continues to be in the hands of the wealthiest of Americans, some employers continue to try to dissuade workers from organizing a union: 70% of employers in manufacturing threaten to close the plant if workers choose a union.

Thus, we as a nation need *The Employee Free Choice Act*. This legislation will make sure workers have a fair chance to exercise their democratic right to choose a union by making it easier for a union to act as a mediator for workers if the majority of workers have provided authorized signatures indicating that they want the union to act as their representative, and increasing penalties for violations against employees who are trying to organize a union.

Given the benefits of and continuing need for unions, I hope that you will support *The Employee Free Choice Act*. Please contact me in the near future and let me know what your position is on this legislation, and what I can do to help it towards enactment.

Sincerely,

(sign and print your name and
remember to include your address)

*Remember to contact
BOTH your Senators*