

give them the best opportunity to achieve a good and profitable business venture that benefits the employer and the employee.

To me, that is what today's vote was all about, and that is why I am hopeful that the bill will be sent to the Senate and receive the same type of respect and debate that it did in this body, and that it will get sent to the President for his signature and be signed into law, so that all workers in this country will know that they have the protection that they deserve to reach their full potential as human beings.

Mr. HODES. Mr. YARMUTH, any final thoughts?

Mr. YARMUTH. Yes, I do. I associate myself with the remarks of my distinguished colleague from Iowa and also from Minnesota and Mr. HODES, you as well.

We face a situation in this area of labor management relations, just like many of the other situations we face in this country, where oftentimes, the problems are very complex and there are no perfect answers. And I don't think that any one of us here today thinks that this is a perfect answer, the Employee Free Choice Act, or that we are going to in any way, in one step of this body, correct the inequities in the economy. We always are looking for the best possible answer. We are trying to be fair. We are trying to make life better for the most people we can and the greatest number of people we can. And this does that.

As the world gets bigger and bigger, as corporations consolidate and get bigger and bigger, the power of every man and woman to determine his or her own fate gets less and less. And in our small way today, a significant way, but in a small way, I think we have begun to reverse a slide of imbalance in the economy and a slide to total inequity and helplessness on the part of American workers.

During my many stops at picnics last summer, I ran into a man who was in his early 50s, and he had worked for Winn-Dixie, the grocery company, 23 years. And Winn-Dixie had gone out of business. They had gone out of business because of competitive reasons. Nobody was going to help that. And yet, he had built up \$150,000 in his pension fund. And when Winn-Dixie went out of business, he was left with \$30,000, so he had lost 80 percent of his life savings because of the situation with Winn-Dixie.

He was forced to take another job, a job he was not prepared for, not physically or emotionally, probably, and he was struggling to get by.

But the point of the story is, that we are not going to be able to correct every wrong and right and save everybody's pension or protect everyone's livelihood through our actions. But we can take steps, when we see institutionalized imbalance in the economy, an imbalance of power, particularly when it is balanced against the working men and women, we can take

steps like the Employee Free Choice Act and make a difference and make a difference for millions of Americans.

So once again, I salute this body today for the action that it took. It is a significant step on behalf of the American working man and woman, and I am proud to be a part of this body today.

Mr. HODES. In closing, I just want to take 1 minute to thank my colleagues, Mr. BRALEY, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. SUTTON, who was here earlier. I want to thank you all for coming to the floor of the United States House of Representatives to work on this bill and to stand together today to talk about the importance of this bill to the American people.

And I just want to close by pointing out that the issues of economic and social justice that we are dealing with, and we are now dealing with a Democratic majority, are not partisan issues. We were joined in passing a rise in the minimum wage by our colleagues across the aisle. We were joined today by our colleagues across the aisle.

The American people sent us here to work in a bipartisan fashion, and we have worked in a bipartisan fashion, and will continue to because these aren't issues of left or right. These are American issues. And when we respect the dignity of working families and help the middle class in this country, everybody is helped from the top to the bottom.

So I congratulate my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who aren't here right now, but I want to congratulate them for coming today and working with us to pass this.

And I urge everybody who may be listening and may be watching today to voice their concern to the Senate. Reach out to the administration, and let them know your thoughts, that this is an American issue that respects fundamental values of dignity and respect for working people, and that working together, we can lift the middle class, we can help this country continue prosperity and distribute fairness in a way that helps us all.

I thank you all for being here today.

OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALZ of Minnesota). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this recognition and the opportunity to come in as the Official Truth Squad usually does. I didn't bring the Official Truth Squad banner with me today, but I have heard enough of the session that has just gone on.

I see that the 2006 class didn't take very long to be brainwashed by their colleagues who were already here.

I will tell you, I think that maybe every Congress has a theme to it. And

I would say the theme of this Congress is hypocrisy.

I served in the State Senate for 10 years, and I have often commented on this. We were never allowed to tell an untruth on the floor of the State Senate because we would get called down for it. But it happens here on the floor of the House every day, and it is truly an amazing situation to see, and I continue to be astonished by that occurrence when I see it here.

I want to talk a little bit and give another side of the story of this bill that passed here today called the Employee Free Choice Act. We have been calling it the Employee Intimidation Act. And what I find most astonishing is that our colleagues on the other side are so willing to knock down one of the cornerstones of our democracy, and that is the right to a private ballot.

For centuries, Americans, regardless of race, creed or gender, have fought for the right to vote and the right to keep that vote to themselves. Now, just months after a new House majority was elected in 435 separate elections, it has just voted to strip men and women of this country of their right to a private ballot in the workplace. I don't know what could be more undemocratic than that. Again, it just seems to me that hypocrisy is running rampant among the House majority.

In recent polls, almost 9 in 10 voters, 83 percent, agreed that every worker should continue to have the right to a federally supervised secret ballot election when deciding whether to organize a union; 80 percent also oppose the Employee Free Choice Act; 71 percent of union members agreed that the current secret ballot process is fair; and 78 percent said Congress should keep the existing secret ballot election process in place and not replace it with another process. But that kind of feedback means absolutely nothing to the majority in this House. They are bound and determined to pay off the people who help put them in the majority and they are going to do that.

Chuck Canterbury, National President of the Fraternal Order of Police, issued a press release saying that, "without the anonymity of the secret ballot, the Fraternal Order of Police would probably not exist today."

The only way to guarantee worker protection from coercion and intimidation is through the continued use of secret ballot election so that personal decisions about whether to join a union remain private.

Even the AFL-CIO has expressed support for secret ballot elections when workers are presented the opportunity to decertify a union. The union argued that "private ballot elections provide the surest means for avoiding decisions which are the result of group pressure and not individual decisions."

Now, they have expressed their opinion for that, but then sometimes they express a different opinion. And we know that the Federal courts have repeatedly stated that secret ballot elections are the most foolproof method of

ascertaining whether a union has the support of a majority of the employees.

In reality, the card check process does not give employees a choice at all. Instead, it gives union organizers the choice of whether to organize through a card check process. And during this card check process, those employees who do not want a union do not have a voice and are, in effect, removed from the process of making decisions about their own jobs.

Now, I think it would be useful to talk a little bit about who does want this bill, and we have a list. Acorn, which has been very much in the news in the last few months and fined thousands and thousands of dollars for illegal election practices all over the country. That is a really wonderful group to have supporting this bill. I can't understand how the people on the majority side want to be associated with such a group.

And then the AFL-CIO, Americans for Democratic Action, Center for American Progress, the Democrat Leadership Council.

But there is a group that has been left off this list, I noticed, and that is very important to put on.

□ 1730

It is the Communist Party. The Communist Party of the United States favors this bill. And I think it is very important that the American public understand that. Our folks are aligning themselves with the Communist Party. The people who support this bill are aligning themselves with the Communist Party of the United States. Now, I would be a little bit concerned about that if I were them, but it doesn't seem to bother them in the least that they advocate communistic practices.

In fact, in our committee meeting last week or about 10 days ago when we discussed this bill in the Education and Labor Committee, I made a couple of comments about how struck I was by the comments that were being made. The folks were trying to make the argument that not allowing the secret ballot is more democratic than having the secret ballot. And I commented that the illusion that came to me was that of certain people in a circus. I have often heard the Congress described as a circus. And I said that day I could understand people calling the Congress a circus, and I knew exactly where the Democratic members of that committee would be in the circus if they were part of the circus and we all had a place. They would be the contortionists because I had never heard people do such a job on manipulating the English language to make it sound like no secret ballot made more sense than the secret ballot in terms of the democratic process.

I mean, you have got to be a real contortionist with the language to be able to do that. It reminds me of the book "1984," where they rewrite history and white is black and black is white, and

it was a truly amazing display of illogic, not logic, but illogic.

And then they went on to say, and I don't have the exact quotes but I can paraphrase: it is a real shame that there are some people in this country who make too much money, and we shouldn't allow that to happen. We shouldn't allow people to make too much money; so we have to figure out a way to take some of the money from people that we think are making too much money and give it to people who are not making enough.

And, again, that struck me as the definition of communism. And I said, That has been tried in lots of other places, and it has never worked. It has always failed, and we can see it failing.

Here we have one of the strongest economies that has existed in the history of this country, and people are doing extremely well, which is one reason, I think, that people aren't joining the union. We know that union growth is going down, and that is one of the main reasons that they are pushing this, so that they can intimidate people into signing these cards, not have a secret ballot, and force people into belonging to a union. And that is the reason that they are doing this. And as they gained the majority in the House, they see this as one of the big ways again to pay back the unions who helped put them here.

A lot of people today and in the committee talked about personal experiences, and I haven't talked any about any of my personal experiences as far as the unions are concerned. But my father, when he was working, was forced to join unions and he had a visceral negative response to that. It offended him tremendously that he could not go out and on his own get a job and be able to work at that job without having to go through a union boss, pay union dues, give up a lot of his hard-earned money to the unions in order for him to get a job. And he was very, very much opposed to the unions because he had seen that intimidation personally. He had seen money being taken away from him and being misused when he could have used that for his family. We haven't heard too much about that on the floor today. We have heard a lot about other kinds of things, but we haven't heard much about that.

We have heard, though, that there has been no union violence, no harassment, no intimidation. Well, that isn't true. There are at least 300 incidences of violence perpetrated by the unions on either their members or on people who are not members but coming from the union. Three hundred per year for the last 30 years. And I am just going to give a few examples of that:

West Virginia miner shot dead for working during a strike. Virginia women targeted for working during a strike.

And I will give some details about the second one:

When the United Auto Workers Local 149 called a strike against Abex Fric-

tion Products in Winchester, Virginia, several of the workers decided they needed their paychecks and crossed the picket lines to work. They were targeted for harassment and intimidation. In one instance an employee who crossed the picket line found a severed cow's head placed on the hood of her car. Later someone made up a photograph with her face superimposed over the dead cow's head and mailed it to her. The union paid a substantial settlement to six women for its members' harassment of them.

The same thing with the miner, the union was forced to pay.

UPS driver beaten and stabbed by fellow union brothers. Worker who opposed unionization has his house "put on the map."

Math teacher fired for challenging union president. And let me give you the details of this one:

George Parker taught math in Washington, D.C. and was a member of the Washington Teachers Union. In 1997 he challenged union president Barbara Bullock's financial administration with the Department of Labor, and she allegedly had him fired for doing so. But Parker's suspicions were proven correct. Bullock was later convicted of embezzling \$4.6 million of member dues money and sentenced to jail.

Laborers Union thug attacks union and nonunion workers alike: Laborers Union Local 91 of Buffalo, New York, often relied on Andrew Shomers to harm and intimidate workers, union or not, who weren't paying dues to the local. Shomers pleaded guilty in June 2005 to a series of crimes involving violence and sabotage. His offenses included vandalizing the offices of the local housing authority, because it didn't use Local 91 labor to install a small section of sidewalk outside its offices, participating in a group assault on workers from another union, stalking and attacking nonunion workers on an asbestos-removal project by throwing a homemade firebomb through a window and destroying work that had been done by workers from another union and ruining their tools.

Shomers was just one of 15 former Local 91 leaders indicted by authorities in 2003. Following his plea bargain, seven other former leaders pleaded guilty.

Electrician fired for asserting his rights. Workers' families, pets threatened because they didn't want the union.

There are many, many examples of union violence and intimidation.

And one of the things that struck me about the comments that were being made here and the comments that have been made on the floor and in the committee is the attitude of the majority party toward workers. They talk over and over again about the helplessness of workers. They talk about employers controlling employees.

What a bad impression they have of other human beings. It is really part of their overall feeling toward us. They

feel like the government or the union has to do everything for us because we are so incapable of doing anything ourselves.

I find that really demeaning to other human beings, and I don't think they even understand that they are coming across like that. But just in the session just before now, they talked about the helplessness of workers as though the union has to do everything for these poor people who can't think and do for themselves. That is just unconscionable that they would talk that way.

Another interesting thing about their approach, though, is how these same people who don't want our workers in this country to be able to have a secret ballot and vote for a union want that for people in Mexico.

Sixteen House Democrats wrote a letter in August 2001. I am going to take one quote out, and I am going to read the letter. This is what they said: "We feel that the secret ballot is absolutely necessary in order to ensure that workers are not intimidated into voting for a union they might not otherwise choose."

That is the absolute height of hypocrisy. I have given you lots of other examples of it, but to say we want the people in Mexico to have a secret ballot to vote for a union, but the people in the United States shouldn't have a secret ballot? Where are these people living? I am just chagrined at that.

And they write the letter to the Junta Local de Conciliacion, and I won't try to pronounce the rest of it with my very bad Spanish, but it was in the state of Puebla: "As Members of the Congress of the United States who are deeply concerned with international labor standards and the role of labor rights and international trade agreements, we are writing to encourage you to use the secret ballot in all union recognition elections."

Unbelievable that these folks would want the secret ballot for people in Mexico but not want the secret ballot for the folks in this country. Again, I find it absolutely amazing.

I have pointed out, again, they are aligned with the Communist Party of the United States. Those are the people who favor this.

Now let me see if I can go here and tell you some of the people who are opposed to this legislation: the American Hospital Association, the Hotel Lodging Association, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and there are many, many, many more.

Now, what is it that is unique about these people? And I will go back to the other chart in a minute. What is unique about these organizations compared to the other organizations? These are the people that create jobs in our country. We live in a capitalistic country, the best country in the world. I don't see anybody rushing out of this country because their work opportunities are so rotten and so lousy.

They talk about how horrible it is in the United States. Well, how come we

don't have people going to Mexico and to these other countries where working conditions must obviously be better if they are so rotten in this country?

It is because they aren't rotten in this country. It is because we have the best country in the world.

To hear these people talk about it, all these folks who create jobs, all these employers out there, individual small businesses, even large businesses are rotten people and all they want to do is intimidate and harass their workers. And yet unemployment is the lowest rate that it has been in this country in 50 years. Wages are up. The economy is booming. Something has got to be right about this country. But to hear them talk about it, it is the most miserable place in the world to live. I think they ought to find another place to live, frankly, if they think that this is such a rotten place to live.

I, frankly, love it here. I get teary eyed when we sing the "Star Spangled Banner," even when we say the Pledge of Allegiance, because I am so grateful to live in a country where people have freedom and where they are not harassed and where they can do the kinds of things they want to do. But taking the right away for a secret ballot, where is it going to stop? Why don't they recommend taking away the secret ballot for their leadership elections, for example? Would they like to do that? I don't think so. Would they like to take away the secret ballot for us voting when we elect people to this Chamber? I don't think so. But that is what they want to do for the people who want to elect or not elect to have a union.

□ 1745

I think that it is really rotten.

Now, I want to show you what has happened in terms of the decline in union membership and talk just a little bit about this.

This is the real reason that there is such a push on to push this bill through. We are now at the point where we have 7 percent, I believe it is, of private employment where people belong to unions. Most of the growth in unions is now in the public sector.

You can see the total membership. The peak for union membership was in the 1980s, and it has been going down steadily since then. My guess is a lot has to do with the fact, again, that we have a good economy, that things are working very well. Folks have figured out how to protect their own rights. They don't need to pay union bosses, who make hundreds of thousands, even millions of dollars, who live in great luxury, while the workers make much, much less money than they do. People have begun to understand that the unions are not value-added for them. They are not giving them something they couldn't get on their own. Yet our colleagues across the aisle want to continue to believe that poor American workers are so helpless they can't do anything on their own without the help of the unions.

We have said before in the Official Truth Squad that everybody has a right to his or her opinion, but they don't have a right to the facts. Again, I want to point out, this is what is happening. We can see the total membership is going down, the private sector membership particularly, and that is what is really getting at our colleagues across the aisle.

I want to talk a little bit about the kind of assets that some of these unions have too, because for some reason they accumulate a lot of wealth and their leaders, again, are paid huge salaries. The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees have total assets of \$57 million. They have about 1.5 million members and they have 620 employees. That is pretty good. Some of the other ones have even more assets for themselves.

Let's talk a little bit more about the union violations versus the employer violations. The folks in favor of the bill argue that employer coercion during union-organizing drives is rampant, while union coercion is virtually nonexistent. Specifically, they claim that employers engaged in illegal coercion in excess of 30,000 times last year alone, while in the history of humankind unions have only engaged in coercive tactics 42 times.

Well, I read you some details on some of those and gave you some facts. Again, they have their opinions, but they can't change the facts.

But these allegations are both deceptive and misleading. We know that if they are willing to engage in this kind of deception on the floor of the House in a campaign where they are trying to get a bill passed, where their comments are subject to public scrutiny, we can only wonder what type of deceptive tactics they might use in a card check campaign.

Mr. Speaker, the NLRB, which is not exactly a conservative group of people, reports that in 2006, there were 8,047 charges of employer discrimination or illegal discharge and 5,405 charges of union coercion and illegal restraint, in addition to another 594 cases of union discrimination. So we are talking about 8,000 charges against employers and 6,000 charges against the unions. And that doesn't account for the fact that unions are likely to file more frivolous charges than employers.

One thing is clear, however. The numbers are not as lopsided as organized labor and their allies would have you believe. Thousands of cases of union intimidation, as well as employer intimidation, are filed every year.

We should all agree that intimidation by employers, as well as intimidation by union organizers, is wrong. It isn't right for either of them to do it and I don't condone any of it. But while our Nation's labor laws may not be perfect, at least they provide a federally supervised process by which a worker can make the important decision about whether to join a union in private

without his or her employer, coworkers, or union organizers knowing how he or she ultimately voted.

Again, I cannot imagine a more basic right than our right to vote in private and not have anybody know how we vote. It is a sacred right, and we should not allow that to be taken away. What we should be doing is strengthening workers' privacy rights in making this important decision, not eliminating them.

Let me now talk a little bit more about the decline in union membership. For the past 40 years, there has been a steady decline in both union membership and influence. There are several reasons for such a decline, the first having to do with employers keeping their businesses union-free. Some were active in their opposition and even hired consultants to devise legal strategies to combat unions. Others put workers on the management team by appointing them to the board of directors or establishing private sharing plans to reward employees. Another is that new additions to the labor force have traditionally had little loyalty to organized labor.

Because more and more women and teenagers are working and their incomes tend to be a family's second income, they have a proclivity towards accepting lower wages, thus defeating the purpose of organized labor. Another reason is many businesses have gone out of business because of union employees, because union-made products have become so expensive that sales were lost to less expensive foreign competitors and nonunion producers. This results in companies having to cut back on production, which caused some workers to lose their jobs and hence unions have lost some of their members. Today's workers also tend to be more highly educated and tend to be of the professional white collar class. All of these have decreased union membership.

The percent of the workforce in 1948 that were in the unions was about 31.8 percent. In 2004, in the private sector it dropped to 7.9 percent, and in the total workforce it was 12.5 percent. So we know that the numbers are coming down and coming down dramatically. That is why the folks have gone after this bill to try to force people to join the unions by having them simply sign a card and not allow them to be able to have a vote.

As I said before, the hypocrisy that runs rampant in this place is mind-boggling. Bills get called one thing and they do something just the opposite. The Employee Free Choice Act doesn't provide employees free choice. It does just the opposite.

We have had lots of groups and lots of editorials against this bill, many, many people saying this is absolutely the wrong way to go.

I want to enter into the RECORD today an article from The Wall Street Journal from February 2. I am going to read some quotes from it, but I want to

put the entire article in, because I think the comments are so pertinent.

[From the Wall Street Journal, Online, Feb. 2, 2007]

ABROGATING WORKERS' RIGHTS

(By Lawrence B. Lindsey)

Why is the new Congress in such a hurry to take away workers' right to vote? It seems extraordinary, but the so-called "Employee Free Choice Act" is right there near the top of the Democrats' agenda. This legislation replaces government-sponsored secret ballot elections for union representation with a public card-signing system.

Under the act, once a union gets a majority of the workers to sign a card expressing a desire for a union, that union is automatically certified as the bargaining representative of, and empowered to negotiate on behalf of, all workers. In the 28 states that do not have right-to-work laws, all employees would typically end up having to join the union or pay the equivalent of union dues whether or not they signed the card. Moreover, under the act, the bargaining process would be shortened, with mandatory use of the Federal Mediation Service after 90 days and an imposed contract through binding arbitration 30 days after that.

I am sympathetic to the argument that strengthening the negotiating position of workers is good public policy, and that expanding the choices available to them is the best way to accomplish that. So, for example, pension portability unlocks the golden handcuffs that financially bind workers to jobs they may become dissatisfied with after they have become vested. Health savings accounts are an important first step to liberating people from jobs they put up with only because they fear a disruption in health-care coverage.

When it comes to unions, it doesn't take a very deep appreciation of game theory to understand that a worker's best position comes when a nonunion company has a union knocking on the door. Indeed, one allegation about "union busting" by supporters of the bill is that, during union certification elections, one employer in five "gave illegal previously unscheduled wage increases while a similar number made some kind of illegal unilateral change in benefits or working conditions."

In other words, they made workers better off. But, never fear, the Employee Free Choice Act will limit these unconscionable increases in pay, benefits and working conditions by imposing fines of up to \$20,000 against employers who make such "unilateral changes." Similar penalties will be assessed against employers who caution that unionization may cause them to shut down or move production elsewhere.

Sometimes the interests of workers and unions coincide, sometimes they do not. The chief complaint by the bill's sponsors is that unions only win secret-ballot elections half of the time. Apparently workers, after they think things over and when neither the union nor the company knows how they vote, often decide they are better-off without the union. The solution of the Employee Free Choice Act is to do away with such elections. It is hard to see how that "empowers" workers. And it is hard not to conclude that this bill has little to do with employee choice or maximizing employee leverage, and everything to do with empowering union bosses and organizers.

The unions allege that companies use unfair election campaign tactics and that a pro-employer National Labor Relations Board doesn't punish them. But statistics cited by the leftwing Web site, Daily Kos, on behalf of this allegation come from 1998 and

1999—when the entire NLRB had been appointed by President Clinton. In any event, roughly half the injunctions brought against companies by the NLRB were overturned by federal courts: This does not suggest under-enforcement of the law by the NLRB.

All of this does not mean that there are no legitimate complaints about the union certification process. Companies have been found that fired workers for union organizing activities. One careful examination of NLRB data found that there were 62 such cases in fiscal 2005. This is not a large number in a work force of 140 million, or in a year where there were more than 2,300 certification elections. But it is 62 too many, and it would be reasonable to stiffen the penalties for employers who break the law. But it is hard to think of offering more pay or better worker conditions as something that should be punished with draconian penalties, as the Employee Free Choice Act does.

Most important, it is totally unreasonable to deny all 140 million American workers the right to a secret ballot election because some employers break the law. Not only is such a remedy disproportionate, it is counterproductive—if one's goal is worker empowerment. How can a worker be better off if both his employer and his prospective union boss know his views on the union when the secret ballot is replaced with a public card signing? For the worker it is the ultimate example of being caught between a rock and a hard place.

The political rhetoric in support of this bill is a willful exercise in obfuscation. For example, on the presidential campaign stump John Edwards says, "if you can join the Republican Party by just signing a card, you should be able to join a union by just signing a card." The fact is, you—and everyone else—can join any union you want by just signing a card, and paying union dues and meeting any other obligations imposed by the union. But, under this bill, contrary to Mr. Edwards's false analogy, signing a card to join the Republican Party does not oblige you to vote for the Republican ticket in a secret ballot election. The Employee Free Choice Act would take care of that by abolishing such elections. If the Edwards principle was applied to the political process in the 28 non-right-to-work states, Karl Rove and Republican Party organizers could force all Democrats and independents to become Republicans and pay dues to the party if a majority of voters signed Republican Party cards. That is free choice?

The final proof that this bill is about union power, and not worker choice, is revealed by its treatment of the flip side of unionization: decertification elections. These are secret ballot elections in which workers get to decide that they have had enough of the union. So under the Employee Free Choice Act can a majority of workers decertify the union by signing a card? Not on your life. Here unions want the chance to engage in a campaign to give workers both sides of the story—and maybe do a better job of representing them—before the union's fate is decided, by a secret-ballot vote.

No one has ever argued that secret-ballot elections are a perfect mechanism, either in politics or in deciding unionization. But they are far and away the best mechanism we have devised to minimize intimidation and maximize the power of the people who really matter, whether citizen or worker. Congress should think a lot harder before it decides to do away with workers' right to vote.

Mr. Speaker, the article starts, "Why is the new Congress in such a hurry to take away workers' right to vote? It seems extraordinary, but the so-called Employee Free Choice Act is right

there near the top of the Democrat's agenda. This legislation replaces government-sponsored secret ballot elections for union representation with a public card-signing system."

Mr. Speaker, another reason union membership is down is because of the abuses of the unions, and, as I said before, because our economy is so good. We know that we have the best economy we have had in 50 years and people don't need the unions in the way they needed them before.

There was a time probably in the early part of the last century when there was a need for unions. There were worker abuses, and that is very unfortunate. But we know that era is gone, and we don't need that anymore. So we know that we don't need the unions, and people are voting with their feet.

There is another quote that I want to share with you from The Wall Street Journal, which comes toward the end of the article, which points out another part of the hypocrisy of this bill. Let me again quote from the Wall Street Journal article, because I think it says it very well:

"The final proof that this bill is about union power, and not worker choice, is revealed by its treatment of the flip side of unionization: Decertification elections. These are secret ballot elections in which workers get to decide that they have had enough of the union. So under the Employee Free Choice Act can a majority of workers decertify the union by signing a card? Not on your life. Here unions want the chance to engage in a campaign to give workers both sides of the story, and maybe do a better job of representing them, before the union's fate is decided by a secret ballot vote."

You see, they oppose a card check for decertification of the union. That is just not right. If they want it one way, why don't they want to allow it the other way?

The last paragraph says, "No one has ever argued that secret ballot elections are a perfect mechanism, either in politics or in deciding unionization. But they are far and away the best mechanism we have devised to minimize intimidation and maximize the power of the people who really matter, whether citizen or worker. Congress should think a lot harder before it decides to do away with workers' right to vote."

Again, I cannot think of anything more undemocratic than saying to people, "We are going to allow you to be intimidated into joining a union. We are taking away your right to vote in a secret ballot election. We don't think secret ballots are the right way to go in the greatest republic in the world. We do think that secret ballots are the way to go in Mexico, but we don't think that they are the way to go in the United States of America." Again, it is unbelievable to me that these people can stand up and say it.

I want to say again, who are the people who supported this bill and point out the kind of folks that these people

are associating with and say again that the fact that the communist party of the U.S. is one of the major supporters of this bill should tell us a lot about what this bill is doing.

Elections in communist countries are not like elections in this country. There aren't choices given to people. They don't have free elections. What they do is have the kind of election that is going to come about by people doing a card check for these union elections, and that is the kind of election that they want there.

We have heard again comments made over and over again by the people who have supported this bill, but I want to say to you, I am sorry I don't have the Official Truth Squad emblem up here tonight, because we could have both of them here. We need to set the record straight on what is being said.

Doing this bill, if this bill were to pass the Senate and become law, it would be one of the greatest travesties against American workers that has been done in this country, and it would be done by people who say that they support American workers.

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It would be done by people who treat American workers as though they are helpless individuals, unable to do anything for themselves, unable to walk away if they don't like a job, unable to bring a suit against someone who might have discriminated against them.

Again, I don't want anybody to think that I would ever tolerate anyone being discriminated against or anyone being mistreated; I don't support that in any way. However, that is not what is behind this. What is behind this is power and money. These people have been bought by the unions. The unions got them into office, and they are now asking for their payback. And that is exactly what is happening here. And that isn't the way it is supposed to be done.

Our folks on the other side of the aisle have railed against that in the past. They rail against it when they accuse us of doing that, but they are doing it in ways that are really unconscionable, in my opinion.

And, again, I want to quote from the letter that 16 Members of Congress sent to Mexico where they said: "We feel that the secret ballot is absolutely necessary in order to ensure that workers are not intimidated into voting for a union they might not otherwise choose."

I cannot, again, hear how they can justify wanting the people in Mexico to be able to have the secret ballot to vote for a union and take that right away from our great American workers who want the same right for themselves.

I hope that the Senate will do the right thing and vote this bill down, if it even ever comes up for a vote, and say to the American workers, and hear what Republicans are saying: we respect American workers. We will do ev-

erything we possibly can to protect your rights. We are not going to take away from you the right to a secret ballot. That is simply wrong in the greatest Republic that has ever existed in the world.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to address the House once again.

As you know, the 30-Something Working Group, we come to the floor with great pride and information to not only share with the Members, but also the American people, and make sure that we, the 110th Congress, the people's House, carry out the wills and the desires of Americans as it relates to making sure that they are represented in a fair and equal way, and also in a bipartisan way. And that is something I take great pride in because I believe that, as the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD will reflect or has reflected in the major votes that have taken place on this floor, had a lot to do with the American people and the way they live, and the way students were paying high interest rates. And we know it is still going through the legislative process, but it has now passed off the floor of the House of Representatives. And also as it relates to the minimum wage and small business tax cuts. It has all moved through in the 110th Congress under the Democratic leadership, and in a bipartisan way, with a number of Republicans voting for those measures.

We know the will and the desire was there to do so in the past, but the leadership was not there. So what we want to do, when I say "we," Democratic majority, we want to make sure that we keep that even keel that we are on now, to encourage more bipartisanship, and to also encourage and push more leadership out of this House of Representatives. And I want to commend the Speaker and our Democratic leadership for allowing that to happen in the way that it has.

Saying that, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to continue to talk about what we were touching on just the other day. The 30-something Working Group has been on the floor all of this week. This will make the final evening that we will be addressing the Members, on not only Iraq, but also how our veterans are being handled by, need it be the Department of Veterans Affairs, need it be the Congress or the administration. And I read off last time, which I will do before this hour is over, about the lack of funding and the cuts that have been made from the Bush administration in the past. And I think it is important for us to reflect on that.

I think it is also important for us to talk about, in the supplemental that passed this floor, how we put in billions