

Source: Daily Labor Report: All Issues > 2009 > March > 03/31/2009 > News >  
Organizing: EFCA Backers, Opponents Plan to Lobby Congress With Media Event, Fly-  
Ins

59 DLR A-7

*Organizing*  
**EFCA Backers, Opponents Plan to Lobby  
Congress With Media Event, Fly-Ins**

Supporters and opponents of the proposed Employee Free Choice Act (H.R. 1409, S. 560)—which aims to amend the National Labor Relations Act to make it easier for unions to organize employees through a check of signed union authorization cards—are planning separate events during the week of March 30 to lobby Congress on their positions.

On March 31, the AFL-CIO, American Rights at Work, and Change to Win are expected to unveil a new ad and grassroots campaign called “Faces of the Employee Free Choice Act.”

Actors from the television show “The West Wing,” including Martin Sheen, Bradley Whitford, and Richard Schiff, are scheduled to appear with various lawmakers at a media event on Capitol Hill.

Workers featured in the new ad campaign are expected to detail the grassroots momentum across the country for EFCA, according to the American Rights at Work.

“Workers featured at the event are part of this new campaign that continues to ramp up efforts to have America’s workers tell their leaders in Congress why the Employee Free Choice Act is important to them,” the group said. “The campaign features new, creative billboards and building banners that will be displayed throughout Washington, D.C. and in states across the country.”

The group said the event will be followed by a series of activities in cities and towns across the country.

EFCA, introduced in Congress March 10 (45 DLR AA-1, 3/11/09), would amend the NLRA to require the National Labor Relations Board to certify a union as the representative of employees if a union presents signed valid union authorization cards from a majority of employees in the sought-after bargaining unit.

The bill also would increase penalties for employers found to have committed unfair labor practices and would allow parties that are unable to reach agreement on a first

contract within 90 days of collective bargaining to refer the dispute to mediation by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. If the mediator is unable to bring the parties to agreement within 30 days, the dispute would then be referred to binding arbitration.

Republican lawmakers and business groups oppose the bill because they say the legislation effectively ends the secret ballot representation election process because unions would always choose to use card-check.

Democratic lawmakers and union advocacy groups believe the bill is necessary to help create more unions, which would lead to increased pay, benefits, and worker protections.

Labor has made EFCA's passage its top legislative priority while business has placed an equally high priority on defeating the controversial bill. The bill's chances for passage in the Senate were dealt a blow by Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), who previously voted to allow debate on the bill in 2007, announcing that he would vote against allowing a debate this year (55 DLR AA-1, 3/25/09). Both sides have vowed to continue pushing, although alternative proposals are under discussion (58 DLR AA-1, 3/30/09).

### **Chamber Blitz**

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is planning an April 1 lobbying blitz when it is scheduled to fly in state and local chamber officials and business executives to Capitol Hill for meetings with various lawmakers.

Officials from the following states are expected to participate: Montana, North Dakota, Alaska, Colorado, Florida, Connecticut, and Delaware.

“Not only could this bill eliminate a workers' right to a private ballot election in a union organizing drive it could impose a government bureaucrat to dictate workers' contracts instead of the process of collective bargaining and negotiating,” the chamber said in a press release.