

MOTION OF THE COUNCIL OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY

Motion expressing the Sense of Council supporting the Employee Free Choice Act, which would authorize the National Labor Relations Board to certify a union as the bargaining representative when a majority of employees voluntarily sign authorizations designating that union to represent them, provide for first contract mediation and arbitration, and establish meaningful penalties for violations of a worker's freedom to choose a union.

WHEREAS, in 1935, the United States established by law that workers must be free to form unions; and

WHEREAS, the freedom to form or join a union is internationally recognized as a fundamental right by the 1948 Universal Declaration of human Rights; and

WHEREAS, the free choice to join with others and bargain for better wages and benefits is essential to economic opportunity and good living standards; and

WHEREAS, unions benefit communities by strengthening living standards, stabilizing tax bases, promoting equal treatment and enhancing civic participation; and

WHEREAS, states in which more people are union members are states with higher wages, better benefits and better schools; and

WHEREAS, unions help raise workers' pay and narrow the income gap for minorities and women by increasing median weekly earnings by 31 per cent for union female and African-American workers, 50 per cent for Latino workers, and 9 per cent for Asian-American workers; and

WHEREAS, workers across the nation are routinely denied the freedom to form unions and bargain for a better life, with 25 per cent of private-sector employers illegally firing at least one worker for union activity during organizing campaigns; and

WHEREAS, 77 per cent of the public believes it is important to have strong laws protecting the freedom of workers to make their own decisions about having a union, and 58 per cent of workers would join a union if they had the opportunity; and

WHEREAS, employers often refuse to bargain fairly with workers after they form a union by delaying first contract bargaining for up to two years in 45 per cent successful campaigns; and

WHEREAS, each year millions of dollars are spent to frustrate workers' efforts to form unions, and most violations of workers' freedom to choose a union occur behind closed doors, with 78 per cent of employers forcing employees to attend mandatory anti-union meetings; and

WHEREAS, when the right of the workers to form a union is violated, wages fall, race and gender pay gaps widen, workplace discrimination increases and job safety standards disappear; and

WHEREAS, a worker's fundamental right to choose a union free from coercion and intimidation is a public issue that requires public policy solutions, including legislative remedies; and

WHEREAS, the Employee Free Choice Act has been introduced in the United States Congress in order to restore workers' freedom to join a union; and

WHEREAS, the Employee Free Choice Act will safeguard workers' ability to make their own decisions with regard to these abuses, provide for first contract mediation and arbitration, and establish meaningful penalties when employers violate workers' rights;


NOW THEREFORE, IT IS MOVED that the Allegheny County Council supports the Employee Free Choice Act, which would authorize the National Labor Relations Board to certify a union as the bargaining representative when a majority of employees voluntarily sign authorizations designating that union to represent them, provide for first contract mediation and arbitration, and establish meaningful penalties for violations of a worker's freedom to choose a union.

IT IS FURTHER MOVED that the Allegheny County Council urges Congress to pass the Employee Free Choice Act to protect and preserve for America's workers their freedom to choose for themselves whether or not to form a union.

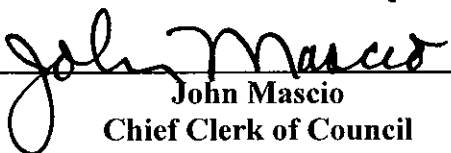
PRIMARY SPONSOR: COUNCIL MEMBER DeFAZIO

CO-SPONSORS: COUNCIL PRESIDENT FITZGERALD, COUNCIL MEMBERS FINNERTY, BURN, CLEARY, MARTONI, MACEY, AND LESTITIAN.

In Council APRIL 17, 2007. Read and Approved.



Rich Fitzgerald
President of Council

Attest: 

John Mascio
Chief Clerk of Council