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## One in Four Chance Workers Will be Fired When Forming A Union

 by **Seth Michaels**, Mar 4, 2009


Every time workers try to exercise their freedom to form a union, there's a better than one-in-four chance that a worker will be illegally fired as a result. That's the finding of a **new study** by the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR), and it's a strong argument for passing the **Employee Free Choice Act** and restoring the freedom to form unions and bargain.

As part of the AFL-CIO **Executive Council**, which is meeting in Miami this week, one of the study's authors, economist John Schmitt, is holding a conference call to discuss the findings in the report and the critical need for labor laws that protect workers. Schmitt is being joined

by workers who have been fired for trying to form a union.

In a **strong statement** delivered via video last night, Obama thanked the AFL-CIO for advocating on behalf of working people and included the passage of the Employee Free Choice Act among his priorities.

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**Tags:** AFL-CIO Executive Council, CEPR, Economy, EFCA, Employee Free Choice Act, jobs, labor, union, union blogs, unions

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## AFL-CIO Executive Council: Economic Recovery Package Good First Step

 by **Mike Hall**, Mar 3, 2009


IBEW President Ed Hill, Labor Secretary Hilda Solis and AFL-CIO President John Sweeney meet with workers at an IBEW training facility in Miami.

In the **AFL-CIO Executive Council's** first full day of **meetings in Miami**, union leaders today addressed vital aspects of reviving the nation's economy for working families, including growing good jobs, reforming health care, strengthening Social Security and revising the nation's trade practices, especially with China.

The economic recovery package is a good start to turning around America and putting workers back on the job, say union leaders, who emphasized that rebuilding the nation's major economic engine—manufacturing—will require strong compliance with the Buy American

provisions in the package.

The council also called for passage of the **Employee Free Choice Act** to help boost the economy by restoring workers freedom to form unions and bargain for better wages and benefits.

Meeting at the union hall of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 349, the Executive Council began the day with a video address from President Obama. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis—who on **Monday night** joined the council and 700 community members in a forum—spoke with the council during the morning session today.

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**Jeff Crosby**  
We helped elect Obama. Now it's up to us to make change happen. In Lynn, Mass., we plan to start on Inauguration Day, by partying with a program.

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## Employee Free Choice on the Move

by [Seth Michaels](#), Mar 3, 2009



Thanks to a strong pro-worker majority in Congress, the support of President Obama and a unified movement of union members and **grassroots allies**, the **Employee Free Choice Act** is closer to becoming a reality than ever.

Nobel Prize-winning economist **Joseph Stiglitz** is the latest to throw his support behind the bill. Stiglitz, a professor at Columbia University, was one of 38 leading American economists who endorsed the bill last week.

Annie Hill, CWA executive vice president, says:

If we want to turn around our economy, if we want to counteract some of the worst income inequality our nation has seen, Employee Free Choice is the way to do it. Despite unsourced rumors in the press, we are confident that Senate Democrats, led by Harry Reid, are going to pass the Employee Free Choice Act and make real bargaining rights a reality for millions of American workers.

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**Tags:** Barack Obama, Economy, EFCA, Employee Free Choice Act, Harry Reid, House, Joseph Stiglitz, labor, media, Nancy Pelosi, Senate, union, union blogs, unions

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## Writing, Rallying and Podcasting for Employee Free Choice

by [Seth Michaels](#), Mar 3, 2009



[Watch Video](#)

When every employee in a workplace asks to be represented by a union, it should be a simple matter. They should get a union and be able to bargain for a better life. For workers at one Minneapolis company, however (see [video](#)), these basic freedoms were thwarted by their bosses. And all too often, what happened here takes place in workplaces across the country when employees seek to form a union.

Andy Aldrich, a fire safety worker, was one of the workers who, faced with arbitrary changes in pay and workplace rules, tried to form a union and negotiate with management for better work conditions and consistent pay.

That's why we went for a union. We were looking for some fair and balanced treatment across the board, for every single employee.

Instead of accepting the wishes of the workers, management refused to recognize the union and instead pushed for a delayed election. Despite coercive one-on-one management meetings with employees, the company wasn't able to block their

wishes and the workers won their election for a union. But the fight wasn't over. After seven months of negotiating, the employees still don't have a contract. In the meantime,

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three of the workers who voted for a union have been fired.

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## SMWIA Member Gets Missouri Labor Post; N.Y. State AFL-CIO Endorses Candidate with Union Background

by [Mike Hall](#), Mar 3, 2009



Carla Buschjost

Carla Buschjost, a member of Sheet Metal Workers (**SMWIA Local 36**), in St. Louis, is the new director of the Division of Labor Standards in the Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DOLIR). Meanwhile in New York, Scott Murphy, a candidate in the special election for the 20th Congressional District seat, won the backing of the **New York State AFL-CIO** this weekend. Murphy is the son of a postal worker and a teacher.

Appointed late last month, Buschjost will oversee the division's worker safety sections as well as the state's child labor and prevailing wage laws. Says Buschjost:

I am passionate about stronger enforcement of laws that create stronger and safer workplaces.

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## Solis Meets with Workers in First Public Appearance

by [James Parks](#), Mar 3, 2009



Labor Secretary Hilda Solis and AFL-CIO President John Sweeney take part in a union-sponsored community event in Miami.

In her first public appearance after being confirmed by the U.S. Senate, Labor Secretary Hilda Solis vowed to fully enforce the laws that protect workers—unlike her predecessor who declared war on working people for eight years. Solis, who was one of the first supporters in Congress for the **Employee Free Choice Act**, also said she would work to pass and then enforce the legislation if it becomes law. Solis, whose parents both belonged to unions, spoke at a community forum at a local church in Miami's inner city last night on the eve of the **AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting**.

Saying "there's a new sheriff in town," Solis told 700 union and community activists in

the audience that one of the Obama administration's top priorities is to provide protection for workers in the workplace. Solis added that she would work with employers to help workers get family-supporting jobs.

If you take care of an employee, that employee will produce. Productivity by our workforce, especially union members, has increased. But we don't see the same value in terms of their wages going up. So there has to be some morality placed there.

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## In Rare Move, NLRB Takes Hospitals To Court

by [James Parks](#), Mar 2, 2009

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is asking a federal court to force Fremont-Rideout Health Group to recognize the California Nurses Association/National Nurses Organizing Committee (**CNA/NNOC**) as the representative of RNs at two of its hospitals and return to the bargaining table to negotiate in good faith.

For three years, management has worked to thwart the nurses' choice to join a union and bargain collectively at hospitals and clinics in Yuba City and Marysville, north of Sacramento.

The NLRB court filing, known as a "10(j) petition," is rarely used, except in cases the board considers to be the most egregious violations of federal labor law, according to the union.

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## Time to Restructure Mortgages, Bank System

by [James Parks](#), Mar 2, 2009

The home foreclosure crisis and the implosion of the nation's banking system are so closely linked the federal government must address both at the same time—and time is running out, says **Damon Silvers**, a member of the congressional oversight committee examining how the U.S. Treasury Department is spending taxpayer money in the Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP) to help bailout the financial system.

At a field hearing of the Congressional Oversight Panel on Friday in Prince Georges (P.G.) County, Md., Silvers, who is associate general counsel of the AFL-CIO, pointed out that policymakers seem to forget that what happens on Main Street affects the rest of the world.

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**Tags:** Congressional Oversight Panel, Damon Silvers, home foreclosures, labor, mortgage crisis, union, union blogs, unions

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## In the States, Opponents of Freedom to Form Unions Spread Disinformation

by [Seth Michaels](#), Mar 2, 2009

Powerful corporate interests who oppose the **Employee Free Choice Act** and workers'



freedom to form unions and bargain are carrying out a campaign in state legislatures, hoping to wrench public opinion in their direction and spread misinformation about the Employee Free Choice Act.

We've reported previously about the "**SOS Ballot**," a shady corporate front group, headed by anti-worker ex-congressman and Big Business crony Ernie Istook, which is attempting to maintain corporate dominance over workers' ability to form a

union. We noted that Istook and his non-disclosed donors were hoping to get anti-majority sign-up initiatives on the ballot in at least five states—Arizona, Arkansas, Missouri, Nevada and Utah. They've expanded their reach, however, investing big dollars to push anti-worker ballot initiatives in Florida, Georgia, Illinois, South Carolina and Washington as well.

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**Tags:** Employee Free Choice Act, labor, SOS Ballot, union, union blogs, unions

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## Tropicana Dealers Authorize Strike

by [James Parks](#), Mar 2, 2009

For 18 months, casino dealers and slot technicians at the Tropicana Casino and Resort in Atlantic City have tried to negotiate their first union contract with management to no avail. Frustrated by management's stalling tactics and unilateral changes in their health care plan, the workers voted overwhelmingly to strike if they are unable to reach agreement.

Over the weekend, 97 percent of dealers voted to authorize a strike. Earlier last month, 91 percent of the slot technicians also voted to strike if a deal is not reached. More than 800 full- and part-time Tropicana dealers, voted to join the **UAW/AC Dealers Union** in August 2007.

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