

## Faces of the Employee Free Choice Act

# Corey Kresse

Former Welder  
Hunter, ND

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### Taking Pride in His Work

After several years of working in road construction with his family's gravel business Corey Kresse found out his wife was expecting twins, which meant his family of six would soon grow to eight. With more mouths to feed, Corey decided it was time to find a job with better pay and benefits to support his large family. In August 2005, he began working as a welder at DMI Industries, a company that manufactures wind-power turbines. “I loved being able to point at wind towers and feel proud because I had helped build them,” says Corey.

### Fighting for Safer Conditions

But as much as Corey enjoyed building something he was proud of – he also worried about safety conditions in the plant. He noticed early on that his welding safety hood had a few cracks in it, which let in harmful metal dust that was making him sick. He also saw that management was asking workers to overload cranes to get work done faster, stressing the machines and requiring constant resetting. After a coworker talked to him about going to a union meeting, Corey decided to attend and signed a union card in April 2006. He soon became an active leader in the effort to form a union at his plant.

DMI began holding frequent mandatory anti-union meetings for employees, and hired a top anti-union law firm. Even though more than 70 percent of employees had signed union cards, because of pressure and intimidation from the company, only about 25 percent of employees voted for the union in the April 2007 election. “With the anti-union scare tactics allowed to go on so long, eventually people will believe them whether it's true or not,” says Corey. To make matters worse, the day prior to the election, Corey – who had a history of outstanding employee evaluations – was fired for a minor safety violation that management typically ignored.

### Why We Need the Employee Free Choice Act

Had the Employee Free Choice Act been in place, Corey believes he would still have his job – and that his coworkers would have been able to form a union. “The Employee Free Choice Act will give workers a bigger voice in unionizing. Whether they sign the card or not, it will be by choice, not by force,” he says.

Corey is currently working at his dad's gravel business, while he continues to look for steady work that will help him support his family of eight. He is also living with the knowledge that while he no longer has health insurance today, the metal dust he inhaled on his old job could eventually cause fertility problems or even cancer. “I was the squeaky wheel, asking for better safety equipment,” says Corey. “They got rid of me because I was going to cost them money – and because I didn't have a union to protect me.”

